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America's Greatest Magazine

This Month

Cover: *Mother-Love*

Harrison Fisher

Oratory

George Ade

Somebody Else

Edgar A. Guest

Decoration by M. L. Bower

Roulette

Fannie Hurst

Illustrated by F. R. Gruger

Ku-hà-va Days

George Agnew Chamberlain

Illustrated with Photographs

The Pride of Palomar

Peter B. Kyne

Illustrated by H. R. Ballinger

The Unfair Sex

Royal Brown

Illustrated by Charles D. Mitchell

She Always Wins

Albert Payson Terhune

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The Stage To-day

Photographs in Artgravure

What's It All About?

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Alias the Lone Wolf

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Buster, the Catspaw

Harris Dickson

Illustrated by Edward L. Chase

Next Month



The Wife—from a drawing by Harrison Fisher

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AMONG the distinguished authors who contribute to June COSMOPOLITAN—next month's—are Holworthy Hall, Basil King, Mary Roberts Rinehart, Frank R. Adams, George Agnew Chamberlain, Harris Dickson, Ida M. Evans, John Russell, William Dudley Pelley, Edgar A. Guest, and George Ade.

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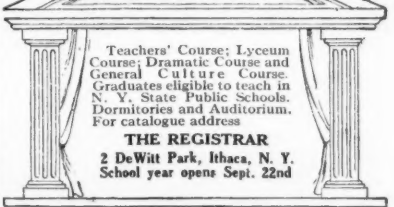
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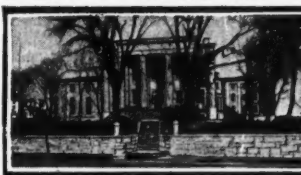
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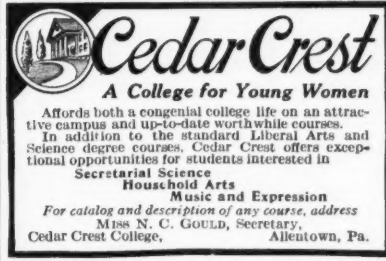
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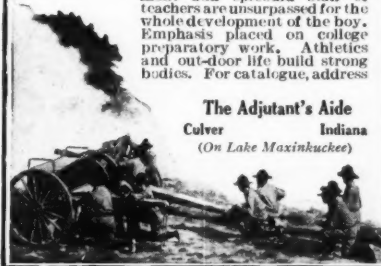
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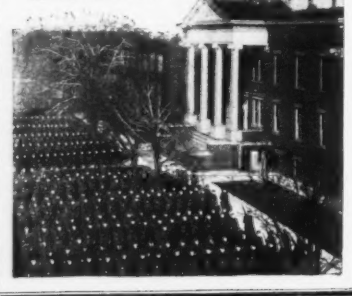
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Continued on page 111

An Informal Page

An informal page by the Business Department devoted to Cosmopolitan's writers, illustrators, editors, advertisers, readers and ideals.

Brevity

NAPOLEON, before a great engagement, was able to speak a few quiet words to his men, and send them into battle with hearts aflame.

Lincoln's speech at Gettysburg was written on the back of an envelope.

One of America's greatest living lawyers once received a \$100,000 fee for saying "yes."

The Sermon on the Mount is condensed into one hundred and six short verses.

Brevity is not only the soul of wit—it's the soul of good writing and effective speaking.

Particularly is this true today, when life moves more swiftly than of old, when people are busier, when there are so many claims on our time.

Business men realize this—as you will see by reading the advertisements in Cosmopolitan. Each message is reduced to the fewest words possible—to save you time.

Cosmopolitan's writers and editors also realize it—each story is just the right length. Cosmopolitan buys stories not words. We do not pay for mere length; we pay for quality. The result is that there is no temptation to pad stories with tedious description and unnecessary conversation.

Our Cover

Someone who saw the cover of this number before we went to press thought we were making a mistake to conceal a third of the word COSMOPOLITAN with the picture.

The fact is, should we leave the name off altogether, few people would fail to identify the magazine.

Harrison Fisher's Cosmopolitan covers constitute one of the most famous trade-marks in the world.

Many manufacturers' trade-marks have been made equally famous by Cosmopolitan.

Poor Old Mr. Knox

The other day we picked up a tattered old book—the kind one discovers up in grandmother's attic.

It was written, so the title-page said, by one Vicesimus Knox, Master of Arts, and published in England in the year 1787.

Poor old Mr. Knox! What he said about the manners and morals of his day sounded very familiar. He lamented the good old days—as *we of 1921* lament the good old days. In fact, he convinced us beyond a reasonable doubt that every generation since the world began has been in the habit of idealizing the past and knocking the present.

But what amused us most, in Mr. Knox, were his comments on the *authors* of his day. He said there were too many of them, that they were shallow, interested in making money rather than literature, and a lot of other mean things like that.

This, reader, he wrote in the year 1787, during the very period when Fielding, Sterne, Richardson, Smollett, Goldsmith, Robert Burns, and many others were producing their immortal novels and poems!

Poor old scholar! He was living in one of the greatest periods of English literature and didn't know it!

If he ever frequented the clubs and

coffee-houses of London, he probably met many of the great writers whose names were destined to live for hundreds of years after his own was forgotten. Yet he lamented the fact that literature had gone to the bow-wows!

Mr. Knox was short-sighted. He failed to realize that when authors win the love and admiration of vast numbers of people it is because they are *good authors* and not because the public has poor taste.

There have always been—there will always be—people like Mr. Knox, who feel that the only good author is a dead author, and the only good story an unpopular story.

But the great public knows better and unflinchingly claims its own.

Cosmopolitan has three million discriminating readers. There could be no finer proof of its quality.

The names of Cosmopolitan's writers have become household words. Rex Beach, Peter B. Kyne, Fannie Hurst, John Galsworthy, Basil King and all the rest are admired in our day as Fielding, Smollett and Goldsmith were admired in theirs.

And for the same reason. They write truthfully and interestingly of the life they know best—the life most interesting to their contemporaries—the life of *today*.

An Invitation

Sometime, reader, when you are in New York, we would like to have you visit us here at the Cosmopolitan office.

We are established between Broadway and Fifth Avenue—between the greatest street of entertainment in the world and the most attractive commercial highway.

The location would seem to symbolize Cosmopolitan—on the one hand, *America's greatest magazine of entertainment*—on the other, *a great shop-window where (through advertising) the leading manufacturers of America display their attractive wares*.

Our office is divided the same way. The Editor and his staff. The Business Manager and his staff.

Perhaps the Editorial Department would interest you

most. On the walls you would recognize the originals of many an illustration you have seen in Cosmopolitan. On the desks you would see original manuscripts of stories yet to appear—stories personally signed in pen and ink by writers known the world over.

And if you were particularly lucky, one of your own favorite authors might stroll in while you were here, and complain to the editor how hard it is to write, these Spring days.

Yes, The Editorial Department would interest you, for it is there that stories are bought and discussed and proof-read and given to Harrison Fisher, Dean Cornwell, W. T. Benda, and other famous artists to illustrate.

But we of the Business De-

partment think you would also enjoy *our* part in the making of "America's Greatest Magazine." We haven't so much to do with authors and artists, but we have quite as much to do with your happiness and comfort.

It's our job to get the advertisements—just as it's the Editorial Department's job to get the stories. And we are just as interested in getting good advertisements for you, as they are interested in getting good articles and stories.

We are really *your* assistants, because in printing these advertising pages we help you to buy wisely the best goods of the best manufacturers.

"If you see it in Cosmopolitan" you may be assured that every care has been exercised to safeguard your interests.

Nearly Everybody Worth While Reads Cosmopolitan

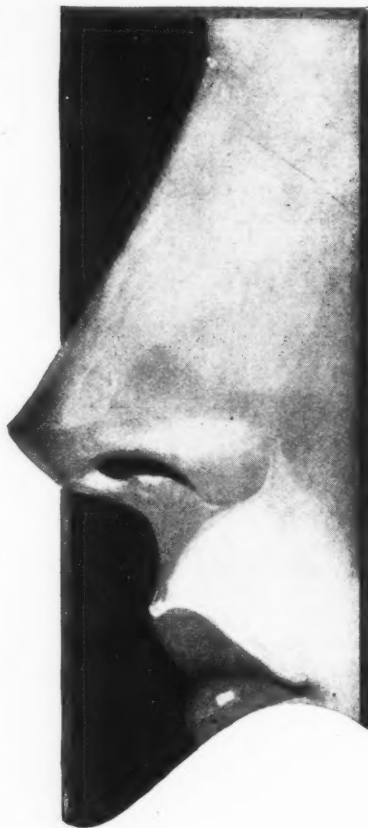


"If I didn't know Chadwick so well I'd say he was lying about the mileage he gets out of his tires."

"Well, you must remember he uses Kelly-Springfields."

"Your treatment for one week"

A miniature set of the Woodbury skin preparations will be sent you for 25 cents. This set contains your complete Woodbury treatment for one week. In it you will find the treatment booklet, "A Skin You Love to Touch," telling you the special treatment your skin needs; a trial cake of Woodbury's Facial Soap—enough for seven nights of any treatment; a sample tube of the new Woodbury Facial Cream; and samples of Woodbury's Cold Cream and Facial Powder. Write today for this special outfit. Address The Andrew Jergens Co., 1605 Spring Grove Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio. If you live in Canada, address The Andrew Jergens Co., Limited, 1605 Sherbrooke Street, Perth, Ontario.



Conspicuous Nose pores—

How to reduce them

COMPLEXIONS otherwise flawless are often ruined by conspicuous nose pores.

The pores of the face are not as fine as on other parts of the body. On the nose especially, there are more fat glands than elsewhere and there is more activity of the pores.

These pores, if not properly stimulated and kept free from dirt, have a tendency to clog up and become enlarged.

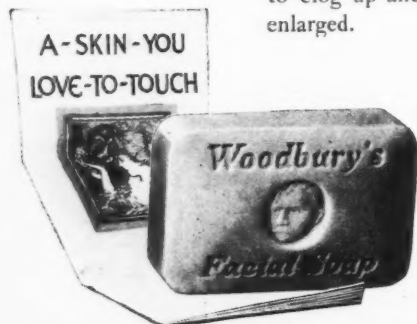
To reduce enlarged nose pores use this special treatment:

Wring a soft cloth from very hot water, lather it with Woodbury's Facial Soap, then hold it to your face. When the heat has expanded the pores, rub in *very gently* a fresh lather of Woodbury's. Repeat this hot water and lather application several times, *stopping at once if your nose feels sensitive*. Then finish by rubbing the nose for thirty seconds with a piece of ice.

Supplement this treatment with the steady general use of Woodbury's Facial Soap. Before long you will

notice a marked improvement in your skin. But do not expect to change completely in a week a condition resulting from long continued exposure and neglect. Make this treatment a daily habit and before long you will see how it gradually reduces the enlarged pores until they are inconspicuous.

Get a cake of Woodbury's Facial Soap today and begin tonight the treatment your skin needs. You will find Woodbury's on sale at any drug store or toilet goods counter in the United States or Canada. A 25-cent cake will last you for a month or six weeks of any Woodbury treatment and for general cleansing use for that time.



A book of the most famous skin treatments ever formulated

Around each cake of Woodbury's Facial Soap is wrapped the famous booklet, "A Skin You Love to Touch," giving scientific advice on the care of the skin and scalp, as well as complete treatments for the commoner skin troubles.

Table of Contents

CONSPICUOUS NOSE PORES
BLACKHEADS
SKIN BLEMISHES
OILY SKIN AND SHINY NOSE

TENDER SKIN
SLUGGISH SKIN
PALE SALLOW SKIN
COARSENEED SKIN, ETC.



A 100-per-cent. American editorial by America's greatest humorist
George Ade on—Oratory

WE see twelve good men and true assembled in one corner of the court-room.

After they have been reduced to emotional irresponsibility by the maddening inconsequentialities of a tedious trial, the imported hypnotizer stands before them.

He massages their primitive sensibilities with strange incantations until they are mentally and spiritually disintegrated to the consistency of corn-meal mush.

He quavers and trills to them about their gray-haired mothers and little children kneeling down at night to pray and the dear old flag and the dying soldier boy.

Even as the Hindu charms the snake with a droning wind-instrument.

All of the stage groupings and the soft lights and the off-stage music which produce sure-fire effects in the theatrical realms of Bunk and Folderol are used with Belasco cunning. The proceedings have to do with almost everything except the brutal facts of the killing of a defenseless citizen.

After a time the premises are salty wet.

The assassin is turned loose—a bouquet in his hand.

The collapsed jurors are taken to their homes in ambulances.

And the rhetorical necromancer who has effected this monstrous perversion of justice is, in a more magnified measure than ever before, the superman of the neighborhood.

The old-time colossi of the criminal courts represented the full flower of the age of oratory.

The word-paintings which charmed the lachrymose agriculturists are now easily identified as chromos.

No Hall of Fame for the late celebrities who merely specialized on mesmeric oratory.

They surrounded Truth with verbal smoke-screens.

They set up false gods and hung garlands on them.

They were he sirens, forever leading simpletons off into the bogs.

The glorified spellbinder lost his job when men began to read and meditate instead of relax the lower jaw and listen.

For many decades our susceptible sires handed the affairs of that huge business institution known as The United States of America over to ornamental song-birds wearing long-tailed coats.

Men got into Congress because they possessed the mountebank's gift of emitting musical sounds.

The national emblem should have been a thrush, instead of an eagle.

The orator lived upon applause. He wanted the noisy approbation of the moment.

The "art" of which he was so proud easily degenerated into a bundle of cheap tricks—a collection of tremolos and mechanical apostrophes and conventional gestures.

He departed without causing any vacancy because his entity was mostly atmospheric. The curse of his example still rests upon us lightly. His lineal descendants are concocting "art titles" for the movies.



SOMEBODY ELSE

By Edgar A. Guest

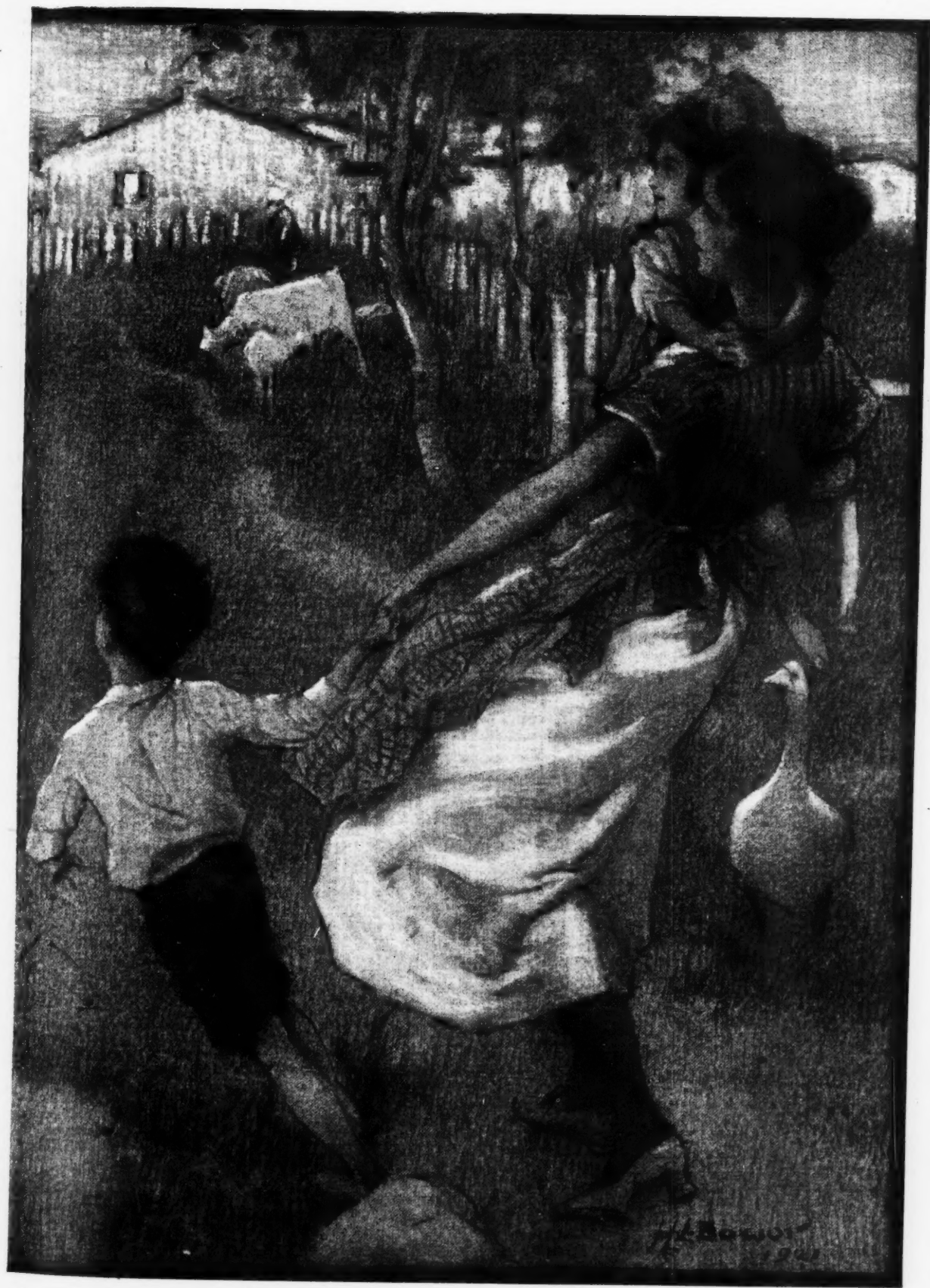
Decoration by M.L. Bower

SOMEBODY wants a new bonnet to wear;
Somebody wants a new dress;
Somebody needs a new bow for her hair.
And never the wanting grows less.
Oh, this is the reason I labor each day
And this is the joy of my tasks:
That deep in the envelops holding my pay
Is something that somebody asks.

I could go begging for water and bread
And travel the highways of ease.
But somebody wants a roof over his head
And stockings to cover his knees.
I could go shirking the duties of life
And laugh when necessity pleads,
But rather I stand to the toil and the strife
To furnish what somebody needs.

Somebody wants what I've strength to supply,
And somebody's waiting for me
To come home to-night with money to buy
Her bread and her cake and her tea.
And as I am strong so her laughter will ring,
And as I am true she will smile;
It's the somebody else of the toiler or king
That makes all the struggle worth while.

Somebody needs all the courage I own,
And somebody's trust is in me;
For never a man who can go it alone,
Whatever his station may be.
So I stand to my task and I stand to my care,
And struggle to come to success,
For the ribbons to tie up somebody's hair,
And my somebody's pretty new dress.



We Enlarged This Magazine, at a Cost of Thousands of Dollars,



A half-crazed mother: the father, a black-haired child in

Roulette

*Fate Spins the Wheel
—to the Red or Black*

By Fannie Hurst

Illustrated by F. R. Gruger

SNOW in the village of Vodna, by the carbon-dioxide paradox, can have the quality of hot white plush of enormous nap, so dryly thick it packs into the angles where fences cross, sealing up the windward sides of houses, rippling in great seas across open places, flaming in brilliancy against the boles of ever so occasional trees, and tucking in the houses up to the sills and down over the eaves.

Out in the wide places it is like a smile on a dead face, this snow-hush, grateful that peace can be so utter. It is the silence of a broody God, and out of that frozen pause, in a house tucked up to the sills and down to the eaves, Sara Simkovitz was prematurely taken with the pangs of childbirth, and in the thin dawn, without even benefit of midwife, twin sons were born—sturdy sons, with something even in their first crescendo wails that bespoke a goodly heritage of a father's love of life and a mother's life of love.

18

No Sicilian sunrise ever more glossy with the patine of hope than the iced one that crept in for a look at the wide-faced, high-cheek-boned beauty of Sara Simkovitz as she lay with her sons to the miracle of her suddenly full breasts, her hair still rumpled with the agony of deliverance. So sweetly moist her eyes, that Mosher Simkovitz, his own brow damp from sweat of her writhings, was full of heart-beat, even to his temples.

Long before noontide, as if by magic of the brittle air, the tidings had spread through the village, and that night, until the hand-hewn rafters rang, the house of Simkovitz heralded with twofold and world-old fervor the advent of the man child. And through it all, the steaming warmth, the laughter through bushy beards, the ministering of women wise and foolish with the memory of their own pangs, the shouts of vodka-stirred men, sheepish that they, too, were part custodians of the miracle of life—through it all, Sara Simkovitz lay back against her coarse bed, so

so We Could Publish This Powerful Story Complete in One Issue.



his arms, tearing her by force out of the zone of buckshot.

Originally planned as a novel, "Roulette" wrote itself as a novelette. Miss Hurst sent it to us as a three-part story. We felt it wasn't the sort of story that should be broken. So here it is—by far the longest short story we've ever published in its entirety.

rich—so rich that the coves of her arms trembled each of its burden, and held tighter for fear somehow God might repent of his prodigality.

That year, the soil came out from under the snow rich and malmy to the plow, and Mosher started heavy of his pedler's pack and returned light. It was no trick now for Sara to tie her sons to an iron ring in the door-jamb, and, her strong legs straining and her sweat willing, undertake household chores of water-lugging, furniture-heaving, marketing with baskets that strained her arms from the sockets as she carted them from the open square to their house on the outskirts, her massive silhouette moving as solemnly as a caravan against the sky-line.

Rich months these were of their small prosperities, and easy to bear because they were backed by a dream that each day, however relentless in its toil, brought closer to reality.

"America!"

The long evenings full of the smell of tallow; maps that curled under the fingers; the well-thumbed letters from Aaron Simkovitz, older brother to Mosher and already a successful piece-worker on skirts in Brooklyn. The picture post-cards from him of the Statue of Liberty! Of the three of them, Aaron, Gussie, his wife, and little Leo, with donkey-bodies sporting down a beach labeled "Coney." A horrific tintype of little Leo in tiny velveteen knickerbockers that fastened with large, ruble-sized mother-of-pearl buttons up to a large-holed-embroidery sailor-blouse.

It was these mother-of-pearl buttons that intrigued Sara's imagination so that she loved and wept over the tintype until little Leo quite disappeared under the rust of her tears. Long after young Mosher, who loved his Talmud, had retired to sway over it, Sara could yearn at this tintype.

Her sons in little knickerbockers that fastened to the waist-band with large pearl buttons!

Her black-eyed Nikolai with the strong black hair and the virile little profile that hooked against the pillow as he slept.

Her red-headed Schmulka with the tight curls, golden eyes, and even more thrusting profile. So different of feature her twins, and yet so temperamentally of a key. Flaming to the same childish passions, often too bitter, she thought, and, trembling with an unnamed fear, would tear them apart.

Full of the cruelties and the horrible torture complex of the young male, they had once burned a cat alive, and the passion of their father and their cries under flaying had beat about in her brain for weeks after. Jealousies each of the other burned fiercely, and, aged three, they scratched blood from one another over the favor of the shoemaker's tot of a girl. And once, to her soul-sickness, Nikolai, the black one, had found out the vodka and drunk of it until she discovered him in a little stupor beside the cupboard.

Yet—and Sara could recount with her eyes full of more tears than they could hold—the often-told tale of how Schmulka, who could bear no injustice, championed the cause of little Mottke, the butcher's son, against the onslaught of his drunken father, beating back the lumbering attack with small fists tight with rage; of little Nikolai, who fell down the jagged wall of a quarry and endured a broken arm for the six hours until his father came home rather than burden his mother with what he knew would be the agony of his pain.

Red and black were Sara's sons in pigment. But, by the time they were four, one year before what was to be the sudden fruition of their plan to come to America, so identical in passion, so inflammable both to the same angers, the same alloy of the good and the evil, the impulsive and the judicial so cunningly distributed in them, that Sara used to say, the day Schmulka came running to her hysterical with the tyranny of the great lumbering butcher over his crippled Mottke, that all morning Nikolai, lying at home that day with a festering toe, had cried and trembled in sympathetic rebellion at the tidings his brother presently would bring.

And so, to the solemn and Talmud teachings of Mosher and the wide-bosomed love of this mother who lavishly nurtured them, these sons, so identically pitched, grew steady of limb, with all the thigh-pulling power of their parents, the calves of their little legs already tight as fists. And from the bookkeeping, one snow-smelling night, to the drip, drip of tallow, there came the decisive moment when America looked exactly four months off!

Then, one starlit hour before dawn, the pogrom broke. Redly from the very start, because from the first bang of a bayonet upon a door, blood began to flow and smell.

There had been rumors. For days, old Genendel, the rag-picker, had prophetically been showing about the village the rising knobs of his knotting rheumatic knuckles, ill omen of storm or havoc. A star had shot down one night, as white and sardonic as a Cossack's grin, and almost with a hiss behind it. Mosher, returning from a peddling tour to a neighboring village, had worn a furrow between his eyes. Headache, he called it. Somehow, Sara vaguely sensed it to be the ache of a fear.

One night there was a furious pink tint on the distant horizon, and borne on miles of the stiffly thin air came the pungency of burning wood and—flesh across the snow-light. Flesh! The red sky lay off in the direction of Kishinev. What was it? The straw roof of a burning barn? The precious flesh of an ox? What? Reb Baruch, with a married daughter and eleven children in Kishinev, sat up all night and prayed and swayed and trembled.

Packed in air-tight against the bite of the steely out-of-doors, most of the village of Vodna—except the children and the half-witted Shima, the *Ganef*—huddled under its none too plentiful coverings that night and prayed and trembled.

At five o'clock that red dawn, almost as if a bayonet had crashed into her dream, Sara, her face smeared with pallor, woke to the smell of her own hair singeing. A bayonet *had* crashed, but through the door—terribly!

The rest is an anguished war-frieze of fleeing figures; of running hither and thither in the wildness of fear; of mothers running with babes at breasts; of men, their twisted faces steaming sweat, locked in the Laocoon embrace of death. Banners of flame. The exultant belch of iridescent smoke. Cries the shape of steel rapiers. A mouth torn back to an ear. Prayers being moaned. The sticky stench of coagulating blood. Pillage. Outrage. Old men dragging household chattels. Figures crumpling up in the outlandish attitudes of death. The enormous braying of frightened cattle. A spurred heel over a face in that horrible moment when nothing can stay its descent. The shriek of a round-bosomed girl to the smear of wet lips across hers. The superb daring of her lover to kill her. A babe in arms. Two.

The black billowing of fireless smoke. A child in the horse-trough, knocked there from its mother's arms by the butt-end of a bayonet, its red curls quite sticky, there in a circle of its little blood. A half-crazed mother with a singed eyebrow, blating over it and groveling on her breasts toward the stiffening figure for the warmth they could not give; the father, a black-haired child in his arms, tearing her by force out of the zone of buckshot, plunging back into it himself to cover up decently with his coat what the horse-trough held.

Dawn. A huddle of fugitives. Footsteps of blood across the wide, open places of snow. A mother, whose eyes are terrible with what she has left in the horse-trough, fighting to turn back. A husband who literally carries her, screaming, farther and farther across the cruel open places. A town. A ship. The crucified eyes of the mother always looking back. Back.

And so it was that Sara and Mosher Simkovitz sailed for America with only one twin—Nikolai, the black.

The Simkovitzes prospered. Simkovitz Brothers, Skirts, the year after the war paying a four-figure excess-profits tax.

Aaron dwelt in a three-story American-basement house in West One Hundred and Twentieth Street, near Lenox Avenue, with his son Leo, office-manager of the Simkovitz Skirt Company, and who had recently married the eldest daughter of an exceedingly well-to-do Maiden Lane jewelry merchant.

The Mosher Simkovitzes occupied an eight-rooms-and-two-baths apartment near by. Sara, with much of the fleetness gone from her face, and a smile tempered by a look of unshed tears, marketed now by white-enameled desk telephone, or, on days when the limp from an old burn down her thigh was not too troublesome, walked up to a plate-glass butcher shop on One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street, where there was not so much as a drop of blood on the marble counter and the fowl hung in white-plucked window-display, with garnitures of pink tissue-paper about the ankles, and even the dangling heads wrapped so that the dead eyes might not give offense.

It was a widely different Sara from her of those sweaty days that had strained so at her thighs and the calves of her legs. Such commonplaces of environment as elevator-service, water at the turning of a tap, potatoes dug and delivered to her dumb-waiter, wide windows, porcelain bathtubs, and, for the four summer months, the five-passenger automobile out of its storage and driven by her son—these had softened Sara and, it is true, vanquished along with the years some of the wing-flash of vitality from across her face. So was the tough fiber of her skin vanquished to almost a creaminess, and her hair, due, perhaps, to the warm water always on tap, had taken on a sheen, and even through its grayness grew out hardly and was well trained to fall in soft scallops over the singed place.

Yes; all in all, life had sweetened Sara, and, except for the occasional look of crucifixion somewhere way back in her eyes, had roped her into new rotundities of hip and shelf of bosom, and even to what mischievously promised to be a scallop of second chin.

Sara Simkovitz, daughter of a ne'er-do-well who had died before her birth with the shadow of an unproved murder on him. Sara, who had run swiftly barefoot for the first dozen summers of her life and married, without dower or approval, the reckless son of old Simkovitz, the pedler. Sara, who, once back in the dim years when a bull had got loose in the public square, had jerked him to a halt by swinging herself from his horns, and, later, standing by, had helped hold him for the emergency of un-kosher slaughter, not even paling at the slitting noises of the knife!

Mosher Simkovitz, who had peddled new feet for stockings and calico for the loose sacks the peasant women wore in the fields, reckoning no longer in dozens of rubles but in dozens of thousands. Indeed, Simkovitz Brothers could afford to owe the bank one hundred thousand dollars. Mosher dwelling thus, thighs gone flabby, in a seven-story apartment-house, with a liveried lackey to swing open the front door and another to shoot him upward in a gilded elevator!

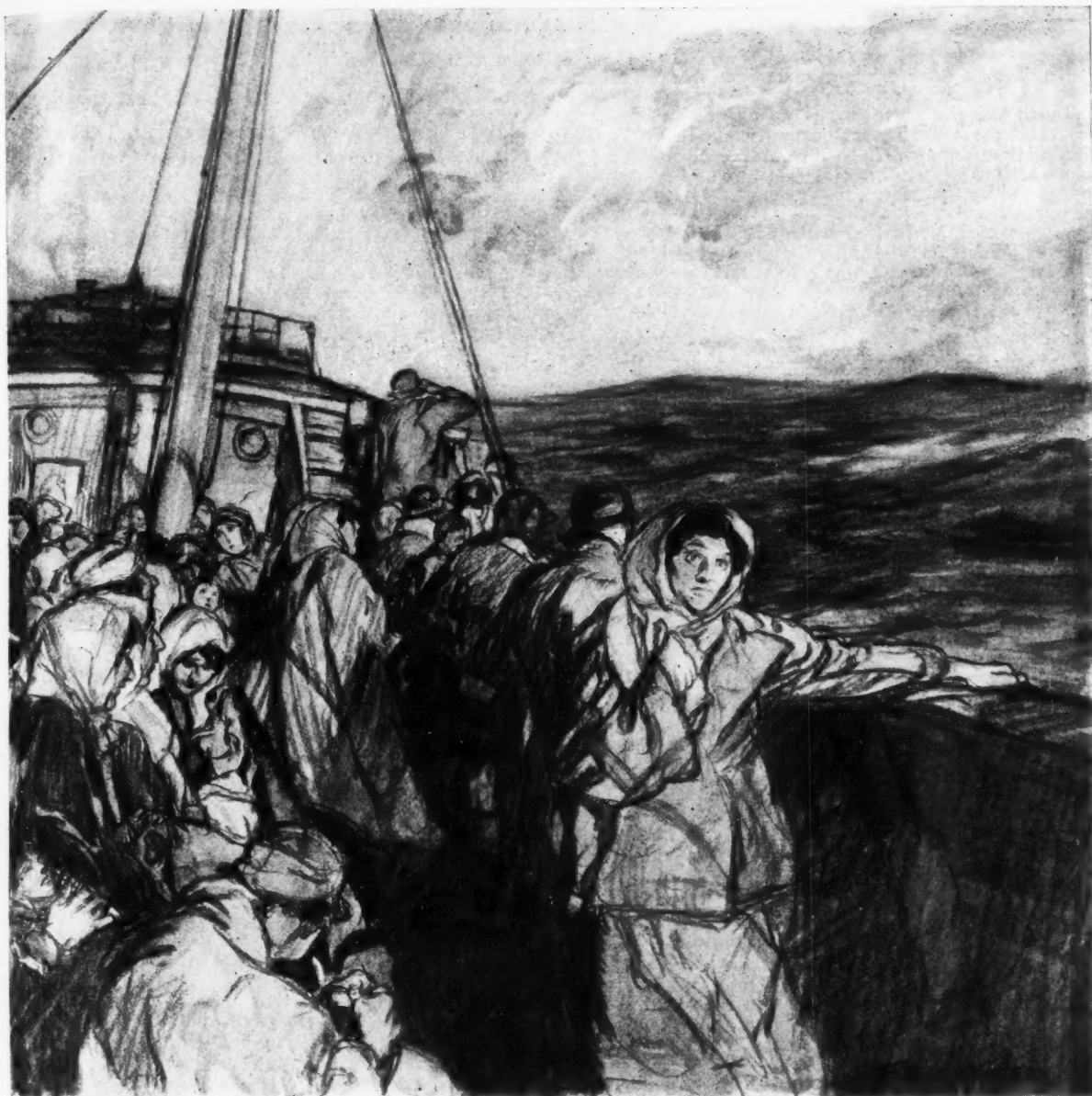
Oh, it was to laugh!

And Sara and Mosher, with their son, their turbulent Nikolai, an accredited doctor of law, and practising before the bar of the city of New York!

It was upon that realization, most of all, that Sara could tear quickly and hotly, and her heart seem to hurt of fulness.

Of Nikolai, the black. Nicholas now.

It was not for naught that Sara had cried terrible tears over him—and that much—but not all of the struggle was gone from her face. Her boy could be as wayward as the fling of his fierce black head, and, sickeningly often, Mosher, with a nausea at the very pit of him, had wielded the lash.



A ship. The crucified eyes of the mother always looking back. Back.

Once even, Nicholas, in his adolescent youth, handsomely dark, had stood in Juvenile Court, ringleader of a neighborhood gang of children on a foray into the strange world of some packets of cocaine purloined from the rear of a vacated Chinese laundry.

Bitterly had Mosher stood in the fore of that court-room, thumbing his hat, his heart gangrened, and trying, in a dumbly miserable sort of way, to press down, with his hand on her shoulder, some of the heaving of Sara's enormous tears.

There had followed a long, bitter evening of staying the father's lash from descending, and finally, after five hours with his mother in his little room, her wide bosom the sea-wall against which the boiling waywardness of him surged, Nicholas's high head came down like a black swan's, and apparently, at least so far as Mosher knew, Sara had won again.

And so it was that, with the bulwark of this mother, and a father who spared not the wise rod even at the price of the sickness it cost him, Nicholas came cleanly through these difficult years of the long mid-channel of his waywardness.

At twenty-one he was admitted to the bar of the city of New York, although an event so perilous followed it by a year or two that the scallops of strong hair that came down over the singed place on Sara's brow whitened that year, although Mosher, who was beginning to curve slightly of the years as he walked, as if a blow had been struck from behind, never more than heard the wind before the storm.

Listen in on the following:

The third year that Nicholas practised law, junior member of the Broad Street firm of Leavitt & Dilsheimer, he took to absenting himself from dinner so frequently that across the sturdy oak dining-table, laid out in a red-and-white cloth, gold-band china not too thick of lip, and a cut-glass fern-dish with cunningly contrived cotton carnations stuck in among the growing green, Sara, over rich and native foods, came more and more to regard her husband through a clutch of fear.

"I tell you, Mosher, something has come over the boy. It ain't like him to miss *gafildte*-fish supper three Fridays in succession."

"All right, then, because he has a few more or less *gafildte*-fish suppers in his life, let it worry you! If that ain't a woman every time!"

"*Gafildte* fish! If that was my greatest worry! But it's not so easy to prepare that you should take it so much for granted. '*Gafildte* fish,' he says, just like it grew on trees and didn't mean two hours chopping on my feet."

"Now, Sara, was that anything to fly off at? Do I ever so much as eat two helpings of it in Gussie's house? That's how I like yours better."

"Gussie don't chop up her onions fine enough. A hundred times I tell her, and a hundred times she does them coarse. Her own daughter-in-law, a girl that was raised in luxury, can cook

better as Gussie. I tell you, Mosher, I take off my hat to those Berkowitz girls. And, if you should ask me, Ada is a finer one even than Leo's Irma."

The sly look of wisecrack wizened up Mosher's face.

"Ada!" she says. The way you pronounce that girl's name, Sara, it's like every tooth in your mouth was diamond-filled out of Berkowitz's jewelry firm."

Quite without precedent, Sara's lip began to quiver at this pleasantry.

"I'm worried, Mosher," she said, putting down a forkful of untasted food that had journeyed twice toward her lips. "I don't say he—Nicky—I don't say he should always stay home evenings when Ada comes over sometimes with Leo and Irma, but night after night—three times, whole nights—I—Mosher, I'm afraid."

In his utter well-being from her warming food, Mosher drank deeply, and, if it must be admitted, swishingly, through his mustache, inhaling copiously the drafts of Sara's coffee.

Do not judge from the mustache-cup with the gilt "Papa" inscribed that Sara's home did not meticulously reflect the newer McKinley period, so to speak, of the cut-glass china-closet, Vernis-Martin curio-cabinet, brass bedstead, velvet upholstery, and the marblette Psyche.

They had furnished newly some years before, the year the business almost doubled, Sara and Gussie simultaneously, the two of them pouring with bibliophiles' fervor over Grand Rapids' catalogic literature.

Bravely had Sara, even more so than Gussie, sacrificed her old régime to the dealer. Only a samovar remained. A red-and-white pressed-glass punch-bowl, purchased out of Nicholas's, aged fourteen, pig-bank savings. An enlarged crayon of her twins from a baby-picture. A patent-rocker, which she kept in the kitchen. It fitted her so for the attitude of peeling. Two bisque plaques with embossed angels. Another chair capable of metamorphosis into a ladder. And Mosher's cup.

From this, Mosher drank with such gusto. His mustache, so thrillingly American to Sara, without its complement of beard, could flare so above the relishing sounds of drinking. It flared now, and Mosher would share none of her concern.

"You got two talents, Sara. First, for being my wife, and second, for wasting worry like it don't cost you nothing in health or trips to Cold Springs in the Catskills for the baths. Like it says in Nicky's Shakespeare, a boy who don't sow his wild oats when he's young will some day do 'em under another name that don't smell so sweet."

"I—it ain't like I can talk over Nicky with you, Mosher, like another woman could with her husband. Either you give him right, or right away you get so mad you make it worse with him than better."

"Now, Sara—"

"But only this morning that Mrs. Lessauer I meet sometimes at Epstein's fish store—you know, the rich sausage-casings Lessauers—she says to me this morning, she says, with her sweetness full of such a meanness, like it was knives in me, 'Me and my son and daughter-in-law was coming out

of a movie last night, and we saw your son getting into a taxi cab with such a blonde in a red hat.' The way she said it, Mosher, like a cat licking its whiskers—'such a blonde in a red hat!'"

"I wish I had one dollar in my pocket for every blond hat with red hair her Felix had before he married."

"But it's the second time this week I hear it, Mosher. The same description of such a—nix in a red hat. Once in a cabaret-show Gussie says she heard it from a neighbor; and now in and out from taxi-cabs with her. Four times this week he's not been home, Mosher. I can't help it; I—I get crazy with worry."

A sudden, almost a simian old age seemed to roll, like a cloud that can thunder, across Sara's face, the lifting power of her facial muscles seeming to sag to the pull of fear. She was suddenly very small and no little old. Veins came out on her brow and up on the backs of her hands, and Mosher, depressed with an unconscious awareness, was looking into the tired, cold-water eyes of the fleet woman who had been his.

"Why, Sara," he said, and came round the table to let her head wilt in unwonted fashion against his coat. "Mamma!"

"I'm tired, Mosher," she said, her words almost like a gush of



A hot surge of unaccountable sickness

warm blood from the wound of her wry lips. "I'm tired from keeping up and holding in. I have felt so sure for these last four years that we have saved him from his—his wildness; and now, to begin all over again, I—I ain't got the fight left in me, Mosher."

"You don't have to have any fight in you, mamma; ain't you got a husband and a son to fight for you?"

"Sometimes I think, except for the piece of my heart I left lying out there, that there are worse agonies than even massacres. I've struggled so that he should be good and great, Mosher, and now after four years already thinking I've won—maybe after all I haven't."

"Why, Sara! Why, mamma! Shame! I never saw you like this before. You ain't getting sick for another trip to the Catskills, are you? Maybe you need some baths—"

"Sulphur-water don't cure heart-sickness."

"Heart-sickness, nonsense! You know I don't always take sides with Nicky, mamma. I don't say he ain't been a hard boy to raise. I always say, when people brag to me about him, 'God knows we've got his mother to thank for having such a fine son.' But a man, mamma, is a man. I wouldn't think much of him if

he wasn't. You ain't got him to your apron-string in short pants any more. Whatever troubles we've had with him, women haven't been one of them. Shame, mamma, the first time your grown-up son of a man cuts up maybe a little nonsense with the girls! Shame!"

"Girls! No one would want more than me he should settle himself down to a fine, self-respecting citizen with a fine, sweet girl like Ad—"

"Believe me, and I ain't ashamed to say, if I wasn't an angel neither every minute before I was married."

"My husband brags to me about his indiscretions."

"Na, na, mamma; right away when I open my mouth you make out a case against me. I only say it to show you how a mother maybe don't understand as well as a father how natural a few wild oats can be."

"Leo didn't have 'em."

"Leo ain't a genius. He's just a good boy."

"I—I worry so!"

"Sara, I ask you: Would I worry, too, if there was a reason? God forbid, if his nonsense should lead to really something serious, then it's time to worry."

Sara Simkovitz dried her eyes, but it was as if the shadow of crucifixion had moved forward in them.

"If just once, Mosher, Nicky would make it easy for me, like Leo did for Gussie. When Leo's time comes, he marries a fine girl like Irma Berkowitz from a fine family and has fine children without Gussie has to cry her eyes out first maybe he's in company that—that—"

"I don't say, Sara, we didn't have our hard times with your boy. But we got results enough that we shouldn't complain. Maybe you're right. With a boy like Leo, a regular good business head who comes into the firm with us, it ain't been such a strain for Gussie and Aaron as for us. But neither have they got the smart son, the lawyer of the family, for theirs. We got a temperament in ours, Sara. Ain't that something to be proud of?"

She laid her cheek to his lapel, the freshet of her tears past staying.

"I—I know it, Mosher. It ain't—often I give way like this."

"We got such results as we can be proud of, Sara. A genius of a lawyer son on his way to the bench. Mark my word if I ain't right, on his way to the bench!"

"Yes, yes, Mosher!"

"Well then, Sara, I ask you is it nice to—"

"I know it, papa. I ought to be ashamed. Instead of me fighting you to go easy with the boy, this time it's you fighting me. If only he—he was the kind of boy I could talk this out with, it wouldn't worry me so. When it comes to—to a girl—it's so different. You know, even when he's going out only to the skating-rink, how mad he gets when I ask questions where he's going. It's just that I'm tired, Mosher. If anything was to go wrong after all these years of struggling for him—alone—"

"Alone! 'Alone!' Why, Sara, shame! Time after time for punishing him I was a sick man—a sick man, and you know it."

"That's it! That's why so much



fanned the enormous silence of his rage.

of it was alone. I don't know why I should say it all to-night after—after so many years of holding in."

"Say what?"

"You meant well. God knows a father never meant better, but it wasn't the way to handle our boy's nature with punishments, and a quick temper like yours. Your way was wrong, Mosher, and I knew it. That's why so much of it was—alone—so much that I had to contend with I was afraid to tell you for fear—for fear—"

"Now, now, mamma; is that the way to cry your eyes out about nothing? I don't say I'm not sometimes hasty—"

"Time and time again—keeping it in from you—after the Chinese laundry, that night, after you—you whipped him so—you never knew the months of nights with him afterward—when I found out he liked that—stuff. Me alone with him—"

"Sara, is now time to rake up such ten-year-old nonsense?"

"It's all coming out in me now, Mosher. The strain. You never knew. That time you had to send me to the Catskills for the baths. You thought it was rheumatism. I knew what was the matter with me. The nights—Mosher. He liked it. I found it hid away in the toes of his gymnasium-shoes and in the mouth to his bugle. He—liked that stuff, Mosher. You didn't know that, did you?"

"Liked what?"

"It. The—stuff from the Chinese laundry. Even after the Juvenile Court, when you thought it was all over after the whipping that night. He'd snuff it up. I found him twice on his bed after school. All druggo-like—half sleeping and half laughing—the gang at school he was in with—learned him—"

"You mean?"

"It ain't so easy to undo with a day in Juvenile Court such a habit like that. You thought the court was the finish. My fight just began then."

"Why, Sara!"

"You remember the time he broke his knee-cap, and how I fought the doctors against the hypodermic, and you got so mad I wouldn't let him have it to ease the pain. I knew why it was better he should suffer than have it. I knew! It was a long fight I had with him alone, Mosher. He liked that—stuff."

"That—don't—seem possible."

"And that wasn't the only lead-pipe case that time, neither, Mosher. Twice I had to lay out of my own pocket, so you wouldn't know, and talk to him till sometimes I thought I didn't have any more tears left inside of me. Between you and your business worries that year of the garment—the garment-workers' strike—and our boy—I—after all that, I ain't got the strength left. Now that he's come out of it big, I can't begin over again. I ain't got what he would call the second wind for it. If anything should keep him now from going straight ahead to make him count as a citizen, I wouldn't have the strength left to fight it, Mosher. Wouldn't!"

And so Sara Simkovitz lay back with the ripple-writing of stormy high tides crawling out in wrinkles all over her face and her head, that he had never seen low, wilting there against his breast. He could not be done with soothing her, his own face suddenly as puckered as an old shoe, his chin like the toe curling up.

"Mamma, mamma—I didn't know! God knows I never dreamed—"

"I know you didn't, Mosher. I ain't mad. I'm only tired. I ain't got the struggle left in me. This feeling won't last in me. I'll be all right, but I'm tired, Mosher—so tired!"

"My poor Sara!"

"And frightened. Such a blonde in a red hat. Cabarets. Taxi-cabs. Night after night. Mosher, hold me—I'm frightened."

Cheek to cheek in their dining-room of too-carved oak, twin shadow-boxed paintings of fruit and fish, the cut-glass punch-bowl with the hooked-on cups, the cotton palm, casually rigid velour drapes, the elusive floor-bell, they huddled, these two, whose eyes were branded with the scars of what they had looked upon, and a slow, a vast anger began to rise in Mosher, as if the blood in his throat were choking him and a surge of it, almost purple, rose out of his collar and stained his face.

"Loafer! Low-life! No-count! His whole body ain't worth so much as your little finger! I'll learn him to be a worry to you with this all-night business. By God, I'll learn my loafer of a son to—"

On the pistol-shot of that, Sara's body jumped, as it were, out of its rigidity, all her faculties coiled to spring.

"He ain't! You know he ain't! 'Loafer!' Shame on you! Whatever else he is, he's not a loafer—boys will be boys—you

say so yourself. 'Loafer!' I'm ashamed I should hear even the words pass your lips. You should know once what some parents go through with *real* loafers for sons—"

"No child what brings you such worry is anything else than a loafer!"

"And I say no! The minute I so much as give you a finger in finding fault with that boy, right away you take a hand."

"I'll break his—"

"You don't know yet a joke when you hear one. I wanted to get you mad. I get a little tired, and I try to make myself funny."

"There wasn't no funniness in the way your eyes looked when you—"

"I tell you I didn't mean one word. No matter what uneasiness that child has brought me, always he has given me more in happiness. Twice more. That's what he's been. Twice of everything to make up for—for only being half of my twins."

"Then, what the devil is—"

"I don't envy Gussie her Leo and his steady ways. Didn't you say yourself for a boy like ours you got to pay with a little uneasiness?"

"Not when that little uneasiness is enough to make his mother sick."

"Sick! If I felt any better, I'd be ashamed of having so much health. All that is over now. If you get mad with him, and try to ask him questions where he stays, is all that can cause me worry. You're right. It's natural a handsome boy like ours should sow what they call his wild oat. With such a *Matzos* face like poor Leo, from where he broke his nose, I guess it ain't so easy for him to have his wild oat. I didn't mean it. Promise me, Mosher, you won't ask one question or get mad at him. His mother knows how to handle her boy so he don't even know he's handled."

"I'll handle him—"

"See now! Just look at yourself once in the glass with your eyes full of red. That's why I can't tell you nothing. Right away you fly to pieces. I say again, you don't know how to handle your son. Promise me you won't say nothing to him or let on. Mosher, promise me!"

"That's the way with you women. You get a man crazy, and then—"

"I tell you it's just my nonsense. I've been nervous ever since last week, when you and Nicky made me keep that kitchen-mess of a servant girl who dirtied up my house more as she helped. Rubber gloves she wore to work in till I could slap off her hands for their laziness!"

"If I get mad, you're mad, and if I don't get mad, you're mad. Go do me something to help me solve such a riddle like you."

"It's because me and his aunt Gussie are a pair of match-making old women. That the two cousins should marry the two sisters, Irma and Ada, we got it fixed between us. Just as if, because we want it that way, it's got to happen that way. Nerve of us—ain't it so, Mosher?"

"A pair of geeses the two of you!"

"I wouldn't let on to Gussie, but Ada, the single one, has got Leo's Irma beat for looks. Such a complexion! And the way she comes over to sew with me afternoons. A young girl like that! An old woman like me. You see, Mosher? See?"

"See," she asks me. What good does it do me if I see or I don't see when his mother gets her mind made up?"

"But does Nicky so much as look at her. That night, at Leo's birthday, I was ashamed the way he right away had an engagement after supper when she sat next to him and all through the meal gave him the white meat off her own plate. Why, the flowered chiffon that girl had on cost ten dollars a yard if it cost a cent. Did Nicky so much as look at her? No; eating with his ears moving, the way he does when he gets nervous, and like he couldn't wait for the meal to end and him to get away."

"Too many birthdays in this family."

"I notice you eat them when they are set down in front of you."

"Eat what?"

"The birthdays."

"Ha! That's fine! A new dish. Boiled birthdays with horseradish sauce."

"All right, then, the birthday parties. Don't be so exactly with me. Many a turn in his grave you yourself have given the man who made the dictionary. I got other worries than language. If I knew where he is—to-night—"

Rather contentedly, while Sara cleared and tidied, Mosher snapped open his evening paper, drawing his spectacles down from the perch of his forehead.



He could not be done with soothing her, his own face suddenly as puckered as an old shoe. "Mamma, mamma—I didn't know! God knows I never dreamed——"

"You women," he said, breathing out with the male's easy surcease from responsibility, "you women and your worries! If you ain't got 'em, you make 'em."

"Heigh-o!" sighed out Sara presently, having finished, and diving into her open work-basket for the placidity her flying needle could so cunningly simulate. "Heigh-o!"

But, inside, her heart was beating over and over again to itself too rapidly: "If—only—I knew—where—he—is—to-night! If—only—I—knew—where—he—is—to-night——"

II

THIS is where he was:

In the top-story Forty-fifth-Street flat of Miss Josie Drew, known at various times and places as Hattie Moore, Hazel Derland, Mrs. Hazel, and—but what does it matter?

At this writing, it was Josie Drew of whom more is to be said of than for.

Yet pause to consider the curve of her clay. Josie had not molded her nose. Its upward fling was like the brush of a perfumed feather duster to the senses. Nor her mouth. It had bloomed seductively, long before her lip-stick rushed to its aid and abetment, into a cherry at the bottom of a glass from which

men quaffed deeply. There was something rather terrifyingly inevitable about her. Just as the tide is plaything of the stars, so must the naughty turn to Josie's ankle have been complement to the naughty turn of her mind.

It is not easy for the woman with a snub nose and lips molded with a hard pencil to bleed the milk of human kindness over the frailties of the fruity chalice that contained Miss Drew. She could not know, for instance, if her own gaze was merely owlsh and thin-lashed, the challenge of eyes that were slightly too long. Miss Drew did. Simply drooping hers must have stirred her with a none too nice sense of herself, like the swell of his biceps can bare the teeth of a gladiator.

That had been the Josie Drew of eighteen.

At thirty, she penciled the droop to her eyebrow a bit, and had a not always successful trick of powdering out the lurking caves under her eyes. There was even a scar, a peculiar pocking of little shotted spots as if glass had ground in, souvenir of one out of dozens of such nights of orgies, this particular one the result of some unmentionable jealousy she must have coaxed to the surface.

She wore it plastered over with curls. It was said that in rage it turned green. But who knows? It was also said that Josie Drew's correct name was Josie Scott. (Continued on page 128)



You see the waterbuck mooning in some placid vlei, calm and detached as cattle in a meadow.



The Chamberlain outfit setting out from the coast for the hunting-grounds



Old Maolia

WHERE does a shooting-trip begin? Is it at the first embarkation, the first camp, the first kill, or at adventure's conception hanging to two straps in the subway, or in the fastness of a private sm king-den when you say to your friend, "Have you forgotten that there are still places where strikes are unknown, where there are no telephones, no coal- and ice-famines, no mails, where suffrage has not yet been dreamed, where man still moseys along in the unshaken belief that he is king, and where the whole octave of horned game, from the tiny Livingstone antelope to the lordly koodoo, wanders the unfenced plains by day,

Ku-hà-va Days

Illustrated with photographs by Charles Anderson Cass and the author

and elephants crash and lions roar across the stillness of the starlit night?"

He stares at you. His first thought is that you are drunk, or would be if you could. He does not see the picture; it is too sudden, too removed, too foreign to the rasping grind of what has come to be every-day life. In trying to make him grasp the far world in your mind's eye, the well-remembered picture comes more and more clearly to your own vision. You see the waterbuck mooning in some placid vlei, calm and detached as cattle in a meadow, until a breath of man-tainted air sends them to their feet and they stand, thick-necked, alert, the wide-spread lyre of their graceful horns catching the flat gleam of the morning sun. You feed him that picture slowly and then go on to tell of troops of the wildebeest, too curious idiot of the plains, facile meat for the hungry camp; of the sable antelope, deep-chested, scythe-horned, startlingly black and white, and incorrigibly polygamous; of the gentle eland, bulkiest of all antelope, spiral-horned, tufted, and belled, and tipping the scale at just under a ton of as fine-grained beef as palate could wish. You name the wary koodoo, whisperer of the still shyer inyala, and murmur a half-promise of elephant and lion.

Your friend's eye fills slowly with the light of dreams. His mind goes back to memories of his own of wide spaces, of the long shot at mountain-sheep, of crashing moose and shadowy caribou, of shuffling grizzly and the fugitive black bear, of the joy of fatigue with camp at its long end, but, most of all, of the smell of wood fires burning in the open before the angle of a waiting tent.

With such a picture thrown up in the high lights of happy



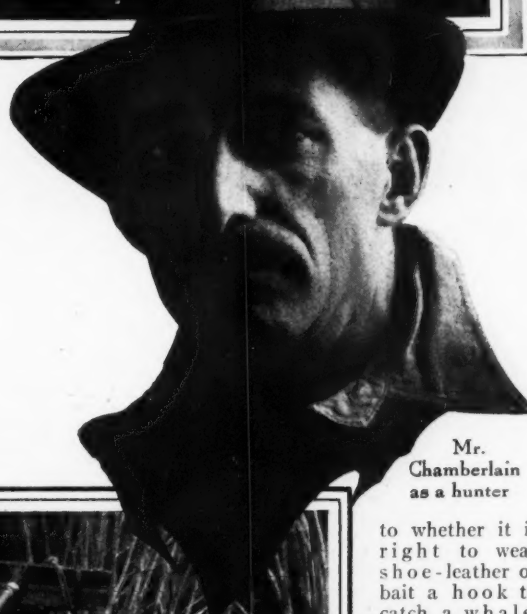
Having failed to swing off from the pier-head into the wind, the crew faced the long task of clawing their way to shore.

The first of the most vivid and dramatic series of articles ever published on big-game hunting in Africa

By

George Agnew Chamberlain,

novelist, humorist, diplomatist, and hunter



Mr.
Chamberlain
as a hunter

recollection, the truth stands out that the mere act of killing is not all of shooting. You know the truth of that because you read your own heart. You know that against the lure of new scenes, unvisited places, mounting appetite, surging blood, clearing eye, returning youth, and the unfathomable peace of an utterly new yet primitive world, the accomplished fact of one more trophy becomes a mere incident with the moral aspects of combat and murder shrunk to the dimensions of a discussion as



A load—two guns and a baby.

to whether it is right to wear shoe-leather or bait a hook to catch a whale. Quite aside from the atavistic and reprehensible inclination to take life, every man dreams of escape, longs to get away; and playing solely upon that master-chord, you drive your friend to a deep sigh, to saying he can't possibly go, to shaking his head and sighing again, and finally to staring ten thousand miles away with a

half-smile on his lips which proclaims him irretrievably caught.

Two weeks later, we were together in London, sweating blood over the choice of batteries. That hyperbole is hardly a figure of speech, for there is no battle of experts more baffling than the endless discussion as to the proper armament for tackling the heavy and the dangerous game of Africa. An old hand at it invariably starts in with what he is convinced is a perfect battery; just as invariably he comes out saying, "Well, I carried this and that, but *if I were you*—" Only one admonition can never go wrong—if you have a rifle which gets results, what is known as a "lucky" gun, hang on to it as you would to your back teeth.

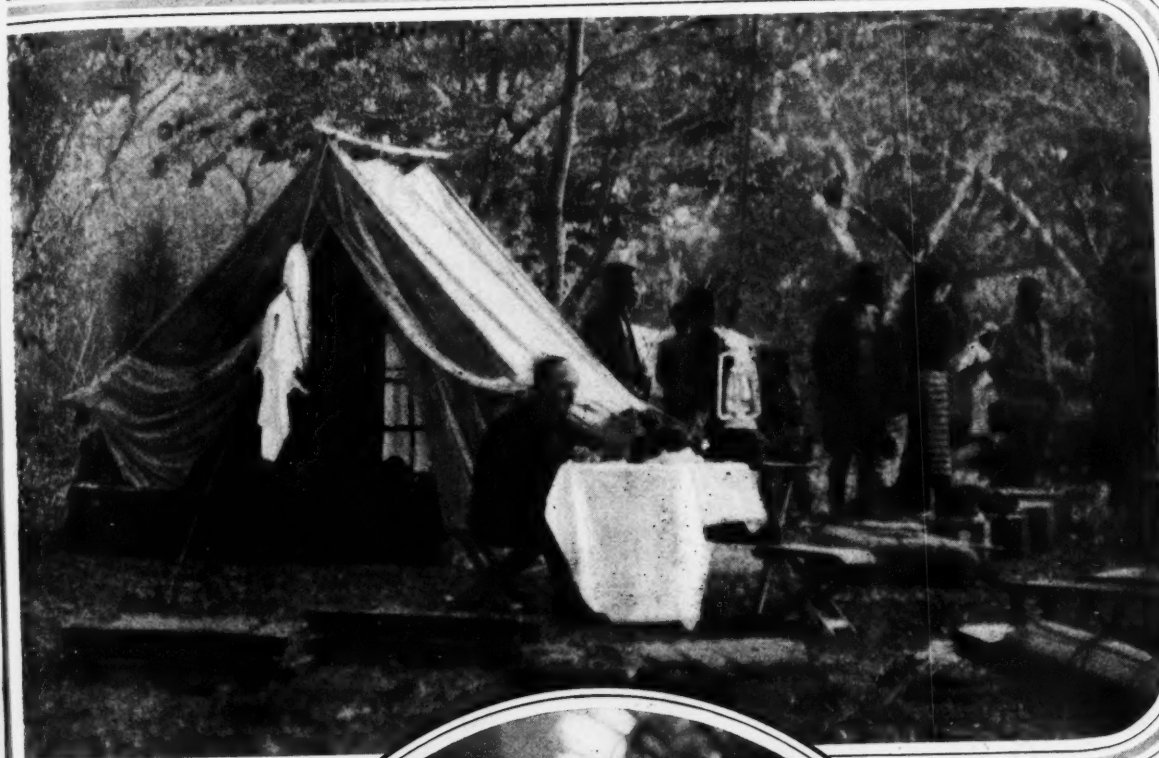
Needless to say, Cass and I purchased two "perfect batteries" after haunting a dozen famous gunmakers morning, noon, and evening for a week. We then bludgeoned a shipping office into renting us a last-minute cabin, and a month later to a day we were watching tide and wind hammer a lateen-rigged boat laden with all we possessed, including a precious cook and two safari servants, against the interminable length of the concrete pier of a little-known port on the coast of Africa. The all-but-naked crew, trained in the choppy waters of a treacherous bay, were vociferous and appar-



(In oval) Abrantes, Mr. Chamberlain's host at the African seaport, and his mule-team
(Below) Getting under way after the lunch-hour

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Breakfast in the forest:
Cass in foreground. (In
circle, left to right) Ma-
dada, Magudogudo
and Bongo, tried
trackers and hunters

ently panicky, but in reality they did not lose their heads. Having failed to swing off from the pier-head into the wind, they faced the long task of clawing their way to shore and a mile along the beach before they could set their pointed sails. During a nervous hour they exhibited the un-failing patience and energy which the African brings to bear on any fixed task within the range of his comprehension and which, time and again, has made white men thrill to the thought that, with all his faults, the Kafir is no quitter.

From the vantage-point of the pier, and, later, from the spray-soaked stern of a fast cutter smartly handled, we watched the cargo-boat, the only lugger that attempted a crossing that day, extricate itself from one difficulty after another until, just before sunset and still in mid-channel, one of its belled sails blew away in ribbons and we felt our hearts sink. However, Abrantes, our friend and host for the night, said cheerfully that the accident meant nothing worse than a forced landing down the beach and a long carry. Who that has shot big game or little does not know the strange fever which possesses one to get on the shooting-ground? A missed train-connection is a tragedy; a day's stop-over or a week's wait for a steamer seems to open a great gap in the entire shooting-season. Any suggestion to take it easy, to wait for this or that eventuality, seems stupidity or worse—a betrayal. Consequently it was an un-mixed



joy to find ourselves in the hands of a sportsman possessed of the sixth sense which enabled him to stand in our own impatient shoes and give one quiet order after another toward the immediate retrieving of our kit and the assembling of the safari for an early start on the following day.

The road from New York to the great valley of the Inhasune is a long road, but the longest stretch in all its month and a half of travel is the sandy highway without a turning which (Continued on page 141)



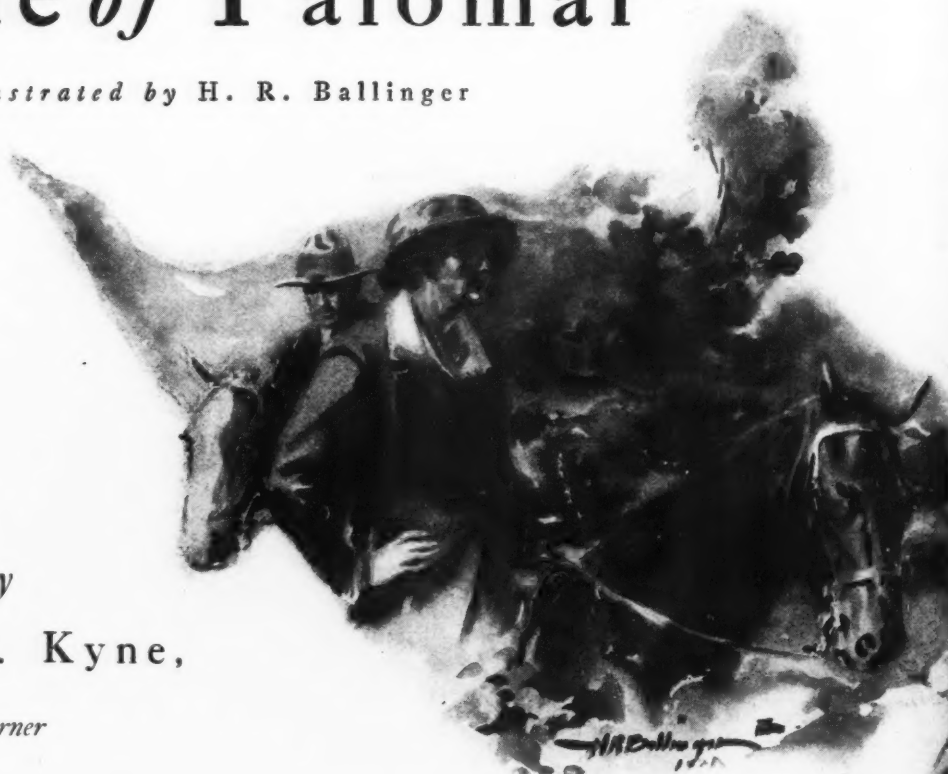
Mr. Chamberlain in Africa

The Pride of Palomar

Illustrated by H. R. Ballinger

A Romance
of
the New West

By
Peter B. Kyne,
Westerner



Don Mike, the Boy—

—otherwise known as Don Miguel Farrel, a fascinating blend of Spanish and Irish, returns from the war to find himself officially dead, his father buried and his Rancho Palomar occupied, through mortgage foreclosure, by John Parker of Wall Street. To redeem his property, Farrel must raise \$300,000 in seven months. Parker blocks his efforts in order that he may carry out his own project—engineered by Okada, the “potato baron”—for colonizing the land with Japanese, and putting through an irrigation scheme. Despite conflicting business interests, the members of the Parker family like Farrel, and pending the adjustment of their affairs, they arrange to spend a year on his ranch as paying guests.

Kay Parker, the Girl—

—is the daughter of the capitalist who has leased a part of the ranch, for sheep-grazing purposes, to Loustalot, an old-time enemy of the Farrels. Loustalot calls on Parker, finds Farrel there, and realizing that his return exposes his property to attachment on an old judgment, steals a horse and flees. Farrel captures him and sends him back to the ranch in charge of Pablo, the majordomo, who locks him up in the “calaboose.” Loustalot escapes with the aid of Okada and hastens to his bank in El Toro—only to find that Farrel had anticipated him by a few moments. Farrel attaches Loustalot’s bank account and, in addition, lays claim to 10,000 of his sheep which are “trespassing” on Rancho Palomar.

XVIII

DON MIKE’S assumption that Pablo would seek balm for his injured feelings at the expense of the potato baron was one born of a very intimate knowledge of the mental processes of Pablo and those of his breed. And Pablo, on that fateful day, did not disappoint his master’s expectations. Old he was, and stiff and creaky of joint, but what he lacked in physical prowess he possessed in guile. Forbidden to follow his natural inclinations, which was to stab the potato baron frequently and fatally with a businesslike dirk which was never absent from his person except when he slept, Pablo had recourse to another artifice of his peculiar calling—to wit, the rawhide riata.

As Okada emerged from the dining-room into the patio, Pablo entered from the rear gate, riata in hand; as the Japanese crossed the garden to his room in the opposite wing of the hacienda, Pablo made a deft little cast and dropped his loop neatly over the

potato baron’s body, pinioning the latter’s arms securely to his sides. Keeping a stiff strain on the riata, Pablo drew his victim swiftly toward the porch, round an upright of which he had taken a hitch; in a surprisingly brief period, despite the Jap’s frantic efforts to release himself, Pablo had his man lashed firmly to the porch column, whereupon he proceeded to flog his prisoner with a heavy quirt which, throughout the operation, had dangled from his left wrist. With each blow, old Pablo tossed a pleasantry at his victim, who took the dreadful scourging without an outcry, never ceasing a dogged effort to twist loose from his bonds until his straining and flinching loosed the ancient rusty nails at top and bottom of the upright, and, with a crash, the Oriental fell headlong, backward on the porch, as a tree falls. Thereupon, Pablo kicked him half a dozen times for good measure, and proceeded to roll him over and over along the porch toward his room. Eventually this procedure unwound him from the riata; Pablo then removed the loop, and Okada staggered into his room and fell, half fainting, on his bed.

His honor now quite clean, Pablo departed from the patio. He had been less than five minutes on his mission of vengeance, and when John Parker and his wife came out of the dining-room, the sight of the imperturbable old majordomo unconcernedly coiling his "twine" roused in them no apprehension as to the punishment that had overtaken Okada.

Having finished their luncheon—a singularly pleasant *tête-à-tête*—Don Mike and Kay joined Mr. and Mrs. Parker. At once Farrel's glance marked the absence of the porch column.

"I declare," he announced, with mock seriousness, "a portion of my veranda has given way. I wonder if a man could have been tied to it. I heard a crash, and at the time it occurred to me that it was a heavy crash—heavier than the weight of that old porch column would produce. Mr. Parker, may I suggest that you investigate the physical condition of our Japanese friend? He is doubtless in his room."

Parker flashed his host a quick glance, almost of resentment, and went to Okada's room. When he returned, he said soberly: "Pablo has beaten the little fellow into a pitiable condition.

"that Mr. Okada might be grateful for the services of the excellent Murray, if the potato baron is, as I shrewdly suspect he will be, leaving within five minutes."

"Good Heavens, man, I believe it will be an hour before he can walk!"

Farrel glanced critically at his wrist-watch and seemed to ponder this.

"I fear five minutes is all I can permit, sir," he replied. "If he should be unable to walk from his room, Murray, who is the soul of thoughtfulness, will doubtless assist him to the waiting automobile."

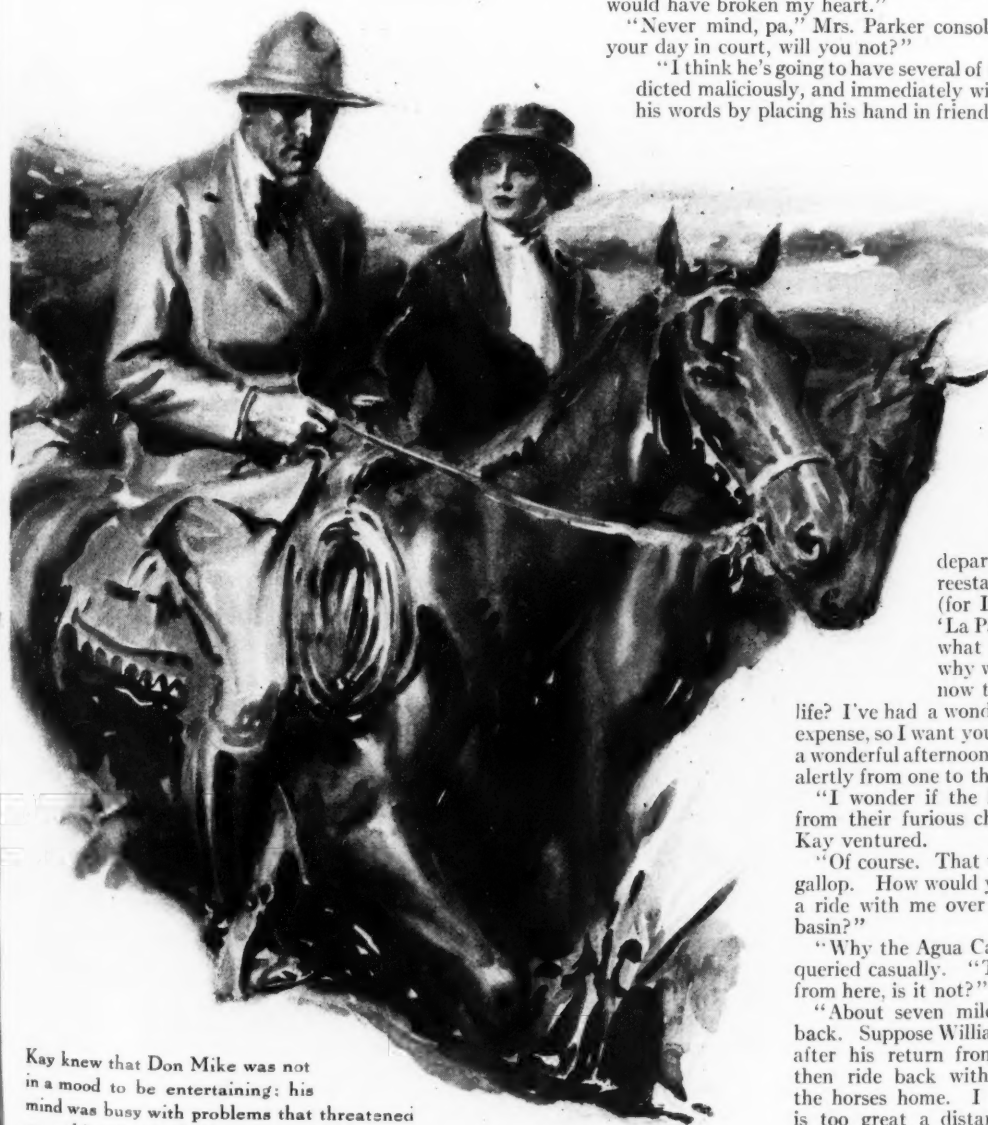
Five minutes later, the potato baron and the potato baron's suitcase were lifted into the tonneau of the car by Murray and William. From over by the blacksmith shop, Don Mike saw Parker bid his Japanese confrère adieu, and as the car dipped below the mesa, Parker came over and joined them.

"Thought you were going in to El Toro this afternoon," the young man suggested.

"I had planned to, but changed my mind after beholding that Nipponese ruin. To have driven to El Toro with him would have broken my heart."

"Never mind, pa," Mrs. Parker consoled him; "you'll have your day in court, will you not?"

"I think he's going to have several of them," Don Mike predicted maliciously, and immediately withdrew the sting from his words by placing his hand in friendly fashion on Parker's



Kay knew that Don Mike was not in a mood to be entertaining; his mind was busy with problems that threatened everything that he held most worth while.

He tied him to that porch column and flogged him with a quirt. While I cannot defend Okada's action in releasing Loustalot, nevertheless, Mr. Farrel—"Don Mike's black eyes burned like live coals. "Nevertheless—I—well—" Parker hesitated.

Don Mike's lips were drawn a trifle in the ghost of a smile that was not good to see.

"—well—" he said softly, distinctly, and with chill suavity,

shoulder and shaking him playfully. "In the interim, however," he continued, "now that our unwelcome guests have

departed and peace has been reestablished on El Palomar (for I hear Pablo whistling 'La Paloma' in the distance), what reason, if any, exists why we shouldn't start right now to get some fun out of

life? I've had a wonderful forenoon at your expense, so I want you and the ladies to have a wonderful afternoon at mine." He glanced alertly from one to the other, questioningly.

"I wonder if the horses have recovered from their furious chase of this morning," Kay ventured.

"Of course. That was merely an exercise gallop. How would you all like to come for a ride with me over to the Agua Caliente basin?"

"Why the Agua Caliente basin?" Parker queried casually. "That's quite a distance from here, is it not?"

"About seven miles—fourteen over and back. Suppose William follows with the car after his return from El Toro. You can then ride back with him, and I'll bring the horses home. I realize fourteen miles is too great a distance for inexperienced riders."

"Isn't that going to considerable trouble?" Parker suggested suavely. "Suppose we ride down the valley. I prefer flat land to rolling country when I ride."

"No game down that way," Farrel explained patiently. "We'll take the hounds and put something up a tree over Caliente Basin way before we get back. Besides, I have a great curiosity to inspect the dam you're building and the Artesian wells you're drilling over in that country."

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LINE COMPS

The Pride of Palomar

"Confound you, Farrel! You realized the possibilities of that basin, then?"

"Years ago. The basin comes to a bottle-neck between two high hills; all you have to do is dam that narrow gorge, and when the Rio San Gregorio is up and brimming in freshet time, you'll have a lake a hundred feet deep, a mile wide, and five miles long before you know it. Did you ever consider the possibility of leading a ditch from the lake thus formed along the shoulder of El Palomar, that forty-five-hundred-foot peak for which the ranch is named, and giving it a sixty-five-per cent. nine-hundred-foot drop to a snug little power-station at the base of the mountain. You could develop thirty or forty thousand horse-power very easily and sell it easier; after your water had passed through the penstock and delivered its power, you could run it off through a lateral to the main ditch down the San Gregorio and sell it to your Japanese farmers for irrigation."

"By Jupiter, I believe you would have done something with this ranch if you had had the backing, Farrel!"

"Never speculated very hard on securing the backing," Don Mike admitted, with a frank grin. "We always lived each day as if it were the last, you know. But over in Siberia, far removed from all my easy-going associations, both inherited and acquired, I commenced dreaming of possibilities in the Agua Caliente basin."

"Well then, since you insist, let's go over there and have your curiosity satiated," Parker agreed, with the best grace possible.

While the Parkers returned to the hacienda to change into their riding-clothes, Miguel Farrel strolled over to the corral where Pablo Artelan, wearing upon his leathery countenance the closest imitation of a smile that had ever lighted that dark expanse, joined him and, with Farrel, leaned over the corral fence and gazed at the horses within. For a long time, neither spoke; then, while his glance still appraised the horses, Don Mike stiffened a thumb and drove it with considerable force into Pablo's ancient ribs.

Carolina, engaged in hanging out the Parker wash in the yard of her *casa*, observed Don Mike bestow this infrequent accolade of approbation and affection, and her heart swelled with pride. Ah, yes; it was good to have the child back on the rancho again.

Carolina and Pablo had never heard that the ravens fed Elijah; they had never heard of Elijah. Nevertheless, if they had, they would not have envied him the friendship of those divinely directed birds, for the Farrels had always fed Pablo and Carolina and their numerous brood, now raised and scattered over the countryside. At sight of that prod in the ribs, Carolina dismissed forever a worry that had troubled her vaguely during the period between old Don Miguel's death and the return of young Don Miguel—the fear that a lifetime of ease and plenty had ended. Presently, she lifted a falsetto voice in a Spanish love-song two centuries old.

I await the morrow, Niña mia,
I await the morrow, all through the night,
For the entrancing music and dancing
With thee, my song-bird, my heart's delight.
Come dance, my Niña, in thy mantilla,
Think of our love and do not say no;
Hasten then my treasure, grant me this pleasure,
Dance then tomorrow the bolero!

Over at the corral, Pablo rolled a cigarette, lighted it, and permitted a thin film of smoke to trickle through his nostrils. He, too, was content.

"Carolina," he remarked presently, in English, "is happy to beat hell."

"I haven't any right to be, but, for some unknown reason, I'm feeling gay myself," his master replied.

He started toward the harness-room to get the saddle for Panchito, and Pablo lingered a moment at the fence, gazing after him curiously. Could it be possible that Don Miguel Jose Maria Federico Noriaga Farrel had, while sojourning in the cold land of the bewhiskered men, lost a modicum of that particularity with women which had formerly distinguished him in the eyes of his humble retainers?

"Damn my soul eef I don't know sometheng!" Pablo muttered, and followed for a saddle for the gray gelding.

XIX

WHEN the Parkers emerged from the hacienda, they found Don Mike and Pablo holding the horses and waiting for them. Kay wore a beautifully tailored riding-habit of dark unfinished material, shot with a faint admixture of gray; her boots were of shining black undressed leather, and she wore a pair of little silver-mounted spurs, the sight of which caused Pablo to exchange sage winks with

his master. Her white-piqué stock was fastened by an exquisite little cameo stick-pin; from under the brim of a black-beaver sailor-hat, set well down on her head, her wistful brown eyes looked up at Don Mike, and caught the quick glance of approval with which he appraised her, before turning to her mother.

"The black mare for you, Mrs. Parker," he suggested. "She's a regular old sweetheart and singlefoots beautifully. I think you'll find that stock-saddle a far more comfortable seat than the saddle Miss Kay is using."

"I know I'm not as light and graceful as I used to be, Mike," the amiable soul assured him, "but it irks me to have men notice it. You *might* have given me an opportunity to decline Kay's saddle. There is such a thing as being too thoughtful, you know."

"Mother!" Kay cried reproachfully.

Don Mike blushed, even while he smiled his pleasure at the lady's badinage. She observed this.

"You're a nice boy, Michael," she murmured, for his ear alone. "Why, you old-fashioned young rascal!"—as Don Mike stooped and held out his hand. She placed her left foot in it and was lifted lightly into the saddle. When he had adjusted the stirrups to fit her, he turned to aid Kay, only to discover that the gallant Panchito had already performed the honors for that young lady by squatting until she could reach the stirrup without difficulty.

Parker rode the gray horse, and Farrel had appropriated a pinto cow pony that Pablo used when line-riding.

With the hounds questing ahead of them, the four jogged up the San Gregorio, Don Mike leading the way, with Kay riding beside him. From time to time she stole a sidelong glance at him, riding with his chin on his breast, apparently oblivious of her presence. She knew that he was not in a mood to be entertaining to-day, to be a carefree squire of dames; his mind was busy grappling with problems that threatened not only him but everything in life that he held to be worth while.

"Do we go through that gate?" the girl queried, pointing to a five-rail gate in a wire fence that straggled across the valleys and up the hillside.

He nodded.

"Of course you do not have to go through it," he teased her. "Panchito can go over it. Pie for him. About five feet and a half."

"Enough for all practical purposes," she replied, and touched her ridiculous little spurs to the animal's flank, took a firm grip on the reins with both hands, and sat down firmly in the saddle. "All right, boy!" she cried, and, at the invitation, Panchito pricked up his ears and broke into an easy canter, gradually increasing his speed and taking the gate apparently without effort. Don Mike watched to see the girl rise abruptly in her seat as the horse came down on the other side of the gate. But no! She was still sitting down in the saddle, her little hands resting lightly on the horse's neck; and while Farrel watched her in downright admiration and her mother sat, white and speechless on the black mare, Kay galloped ahead a hundred yards, turned, and came back over the gate again.

"Oh, isn't he a darling?" she cried. "He pulls his feet up under him like a dog, when he takes off. I want to take him over a seven-foot hurdle. He can do it with yours truly up. Let's build a seven-foot hurdle to-morrow and try him out."

"Fine! We'll build it," Don Mike declared enthusiastically, and Parker, watching his wife's frightened face, threw back his head and laughed.

"You are encouraging my daughter to kill herself," the older woman charged Farrel. "Kay, you tomboy, do not jump that gate again! Suppose that horse should stumble and throw you."

"Nonsense, mother. That's mere old hop-Scotch for Panchito. One doesn't get a jumping-jack to ride every day, and all I've ever done has been to pussyfoot through Central Park."

"Do you mean to tell me you've never taken a hurdle before?" Don Mike was scandalized. She nodded.

"She'll do," Parker assured him proudly.

Farrel confirmed this verdict with a nod and opened the gate. They rode through. Kay waiting for him to close the gate. He saw that she had been captivated by Panchito, and as their glances met, his smile was a reflection of hers—a smile thoroughly and childishly happy.

"If you'd only sell him to me, Don Mike," she pleaded. "I'll give you a ruinous price for him."

"He is not for sale, Miss Kay."

"But you were going to give him away to your late battery commander!"

He held up his right hand with the red scar on the back of it but made no further reply.

"Why will you not sell him to me?" she pleaded him so."

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"I love him," he answered at that, "and I could only part with him—for love. Some day, I may give him to somebody worth while, but for the present I think I shall be selfish and continue to own him. He's a big, powerful animal, and if he can carry weight in a long race, he's fast enough to make me some money."

"Let me ride him in the try-out," she pleaded. "I weigh just a hundred and twenty."

"Very well. To-morrow I'll hitch up a work-team and disk the heart out of our old race-track— Oh, yes; we have such a thing"—in reply to her lifted brows. "My grandfather Mike

induced my great-grandfather Noriaga to build it away back in the 'Forties. The Indians and *vaqueros* used to run scrub races in those days—in fact, it was their main pastime."

"Where is this old race track?"

"Down in the valley. A fringe of oaks hide it. It's grass-grown and it hasn't been used in twenty-five years, except when the Indians in this part of the country foregather in the valley occasionally and pull off some scrub races."

"How soon can we put it in commission?" she demanded eagerly.

"I'll disk it to-morrow. The ground is soft now, after this

recent rain. Then I'll harrow it well and run a culti-packer over it—well, by the end of the week it ought to be a fairly fast track."

"Goody! We'll go in to El Toro to-morrow and I'll wire to San Francisco for a stop-watch. May I sprint Panchito a little across that meadow?"

"Wait a moment, Miss Kay. We shall have something to sprint after in a few minutes, I think." As the hounds gave tongue in a path of willows they had been investigating far to the right, Don Mike pulled up his horse and listened. "Hot trail," he informed her. "They'll all be babbling in a moment."

He was right.

"If it's a coyote, he'll sneak up the wash of the river," he informed the girl, "but if it's a cat, he'll cut through that open space to tree in the oaks beyond—Ha! There goes a mountain-lion. After him!"

His alert pony went from a halt to a gallop, following a long, lithe tawny animal that loped easily into view, coming from the distant willow thicket. In an instant, Kay was beside him.

"Head him off," he commanded curtly. "This ruin of Pablo's is done in a quarter-mile dash, but Panchito can outrun that cat without trying. Don't be afraid of him. They're cowardly brutes. Get between him and the oaks and turn him back to me. Ride him down! He'll dodge out of your way."

She saw that he was uncoiling his riata as he spoke, and divined his purpose, as, with a cluck and a hoot to Panchito, she thundered after the big cat, her heart thumping with mingled fear and excitement. Evidently this was an old game to Panchito, however, for he pinned his ears a little and headed straight for the quarry. Seemingly he knew what was expected of him, and had a personal interest in the affair, for as he came up to the animal, he attempted to run the panther down. The animal merely snarled and gave ground, while gradually Panchito "hazed" him until the frightened creature was headed at right angles to the course he had originally pursued. And now Don Mike, urging the pinto to top speed, came racing up and cut him off.

"Catch him; catch him!" Kay screamed excitedly. "Don't let him get away!" She drove Panchito almost on top of the panther, and forced the beast to stop suddenly and dodge toward the approaching Farrel. As Panchito dashed by, Kay had a glimpse of Don Mike riding in, his looped riata swinging in wide, slow concentric circles—casually, even. As she brought Panchito round on his nimble heels, she saw Don Mike rise in his stirrups and throw.



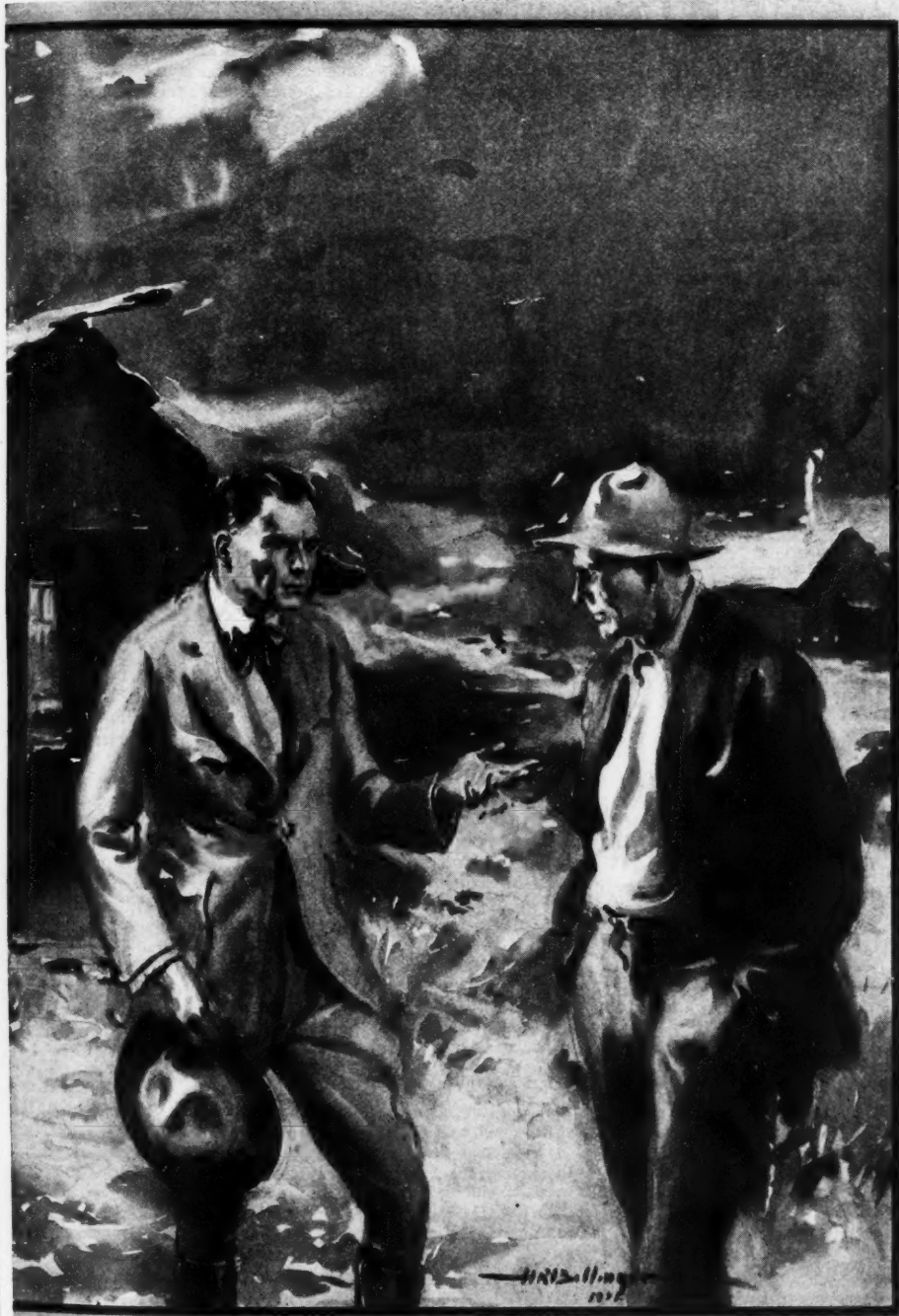
"Stand pat and refuse to cancel this contract," demanded Don Mike.

Even as the loop left his hand, he appeared to have no doubt of the outcome, for Kay saw him make a quick turn of his rope round the pommel of his saddle, whirl at a right angle, and, with a whoop of pure, unadulterated joy, go by her at top speed, dragging the panther behind him. The loop had settled over the animal's body and been drawn taut around his loins.

Suddenly the pinto came to an abrupt pause, sliding on his haunches to avoid a tiny arroyo, too wide for him to leap. The strain on the riata was thus momentarily slackened, permitting the big cat to scramble to all fours and turn to investigate this trap into which he had fallen. Instantly he charged, spitting and open-mouthed, and, for some unknown reason, Farrel led the screaming fury straight toward Kay and Panchito. The cat realized this, also, for suddenly he decided that Panchito offered the best opportunity to vent his rage, and changed his course accordingly. Quick as he did so, Farrel whirled his pinto in the opposite direction, with the result that the panther left the ground

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with a striking while lone sy feet an over a ing the head de grass up The his feet and cas twig an across t the help Farrel s beating



"Make Mr. Parker pay for it. For God's sake, stand by me; I'm desperate."

with a jerk and was dragged through the air for six feet before striking heavily upon his back. He was too dazed to struggle while Farrel dragged him through the grass and halted under a lone sycamore. While the badly shaken cat was struggling to his feet and swaying drunkenly, Farrel passed the end of his riata over a limb, took a new hitch on his pommel, and ran out, drawing the screaming, clawing animal off the ground until he swung, head down, the ripping chisels on his front paws tearing the grass up in great tufts.

The pinto, a trained roping horse, stood, blown and panting, his feet braced, keeping the rope taut while Farrel dismounted and casually strolled back to the tree. He broke off a small twig and waited, while the hounds, belling lustily, came nosing across the meadow. Kay rode up, as the dogs, catching sight of the helpless cat, quickened their speed to close in; she heard Farrel shout to them and saw him lay about him with the twig, beating the eager animals back from their still dangerous prey.

Mr. and Mrs. Parker had, in the mean time, galloped up and stood by, interested spectators, while Don Mike searched round until he found a hard, thick, dry broken limb from the sycamore.

"This certainly is my day for making money," he announced gaily. "Here's where I put thirty dollars toward that three-hundred-thousand-dollar mortgage." He stepped up to the lion and stunned it with a blow over the head, after which he removed the riata from the creature's loins, slipped the noose round the cat's neck, and hoisted the unconscious brute clear of the ground.

"Now then," he announced cheerfully, "we'll just leave this fellow to contemplate the result of a life of shame. He shall hang by the neck until he is dead—dead—dead! We'll pick him up on our way back, and to-night I'll skin him. Fall in, my squad! On our way."

"Do you do that sort of thing very often, Mr. Farrel?" Parker queried.

"Life is a bit dull out here, sir. Any time the dogs put up a panther in the open, we try to rope him and have a little fun. This is the first one I have roped alone, however. I always did want to rope a panther all by myself. Ordinarily, I would not have told Miss Kay to head that cat in toward me, but, then, she didn't flunk the gate back yonder, and I had a great curiosity to see if she'd flunk the cat. She didn't and"—he turned toward her with beaming, prideful eyes—"if I were out of debt, I wouldn't trade my friendship with a girl as game as you, Kay, for the entire San Gregorio valley. You're a trump."

"You're rather a

Nervy Nat yourself, aren't you?" her droll mother struck in. "As a Christian martyr, you would have had the Colosseum to yourself; every tiger and lion in Rome would have taken to the tall timber when you came on."

As he rode ahead, chuckling, to join her daughter, Farrel knew that at all events he had earned the approval of the influential member of the Parker family. Mrs. Parker, on her part, was far more excited than her colloquial humor indicated.

"John," she whispered, "did you notice it?"

"Notice what?"

"I don't know why I continue to live with you—you're so dull! In his excitement, he just called her 'Kay.' Last night, when they met, she was 'Miss Parker.' At noon to-day, she was 'Miss Kay' and now she's plain 'Kay.'" A cloud crossed his brow, but he made no answer, so, woman-like, she pressed for one. "Suppose our daughter should fall in love with this young man?"

"That would be more embarrassing than ever, from a business point of view," he admitted, "and the Lord knows this fellow has me worried enough already. He's no mean antagonist."

"That's what the panther probably thought, John."

"His decoration, and that stunt—dazzling to the average girl," he muttered.

"In addition to his good looks, exquisite manners, and, I am quite certain, very high sense of honor and lofty ideals," she supplemented.

"In that event, it is more than probable that a consideration of his desperate financial strait will preclude his indicating any lively interest in Kay." Parker glanced anxiously at his wife, as if seeking in her face confirmation of a disturbing suspicion. "At least, that would be in consonance with the high sense of honor and lofty ideals with which you credit him. However, we must remember that he has a dash of Latin blood, and my experience has been that not infrequently the Latin's high sense of honor and lofty idealism are confined to lip-service only. I wonder if he'd be above using Kay as a gun to point at my head."

"I'm quite certain he would not, John. Even if he should become interested in her for her own sake, he would, of course, realize that the genuineness of his feeling would be open to suspicion by—well, most people, who comprehend his position—and I doubt very much if, under these circumstances, he will permit himself to become interested in her."

"He may not be able to help himself. Kay gets them all winging."

"Even so, he will not so far forget his ancestral pride as to admit it, or even give the slightest intimation of it."

"He is a prideful sort of chap. I noticed that. Still, he's not a prig."

"He has pride of race, John. Pride of ancestry, pride of tradition, pride of an ancient, undisputed leadership in his own community. He has been raised to know that he is not vulgar or stupid or plebeian; his character has been very carefully cultivated and developed."

He edged his horse close to hers.

"Look here, my dear," he queried; "what brought the tears to your eyes at luncheon to-day?"

"There was a moment, John, when the shadow of a near-break came over his face. Kay and I both saw it. He looked wistful and lonely and beaten, and dropped his head like a tired horse, and her heart, her very soul, went out to him. I saw her hand go out to him, too; she touched his arm for an instant and then, realizing, she withdrew it. And then I knew!"

"Knew what?"

"That our little daughter, who has been used to queening it over every man of her acquaintance, is going to batter her heart out against the pride of Palomar."

"You mean—"

"She loves him. She doesn't know it yet, but I do. Oh, John, I'm old and wise. I know! If Miguel Farrel were of a piece with the young men she has always met, I wouldn't worry. But he's so absolutely different—so natural, so free from that atrocious habit of never being able to disassociate self from the little, graceful courtesies young men show women. He's wholesome, free from ego, from that intolerable air of proprietorship, of masculine superiority and cocksureness that seems so inseparable from the young men in her set."

"I agree with you, my dear. Many a time I have itched to grasp the jaw-bone of an ass and spoil a couple of dozen of those young pups with their story-book notions of life."

"Now, that Don Mike," she continued critically, "is thoughtful of and very deferential to those to whom deference is due, which characteristic, coupled with the fact that he is, in a certain sense, a most pathetic figure at this time, is bound to make a profound impression on any girl of ready sympathy. And pity is akin to love."

"I see." Parker nodded sagely. "Then you think he'll go down to defeat with his mouth shut?"

"I'm certain of it, John."

"On the other hand, if he should succeed in sending me down to defeat, thereby regaining his lost place in the sun, he might—er—"

"Let us be practical, John. Let us call a spade a spade. If he regains the Rancho Palomar, his thoughts will inevitably turn to the subject of a mistress for that old hacienda. He has pride of race, I tell you, and he would be less than human if he could contemplate himself as the last of that race."

"John, he did not capture that panther alive a few moments ago merely to be spectacular. His underlying reason was the thirty-dollar bounty on the pelt and the salvation of his cattle. And he did not capture that Basque this morning and extort justice, long-delayed, with any thought that by so doing he was saving his principality for a stranger. He will not fight you to a finish for that."

"What a philosopher you're getting to be, my dear!" he parried ironically. And, after a pause, "Well, I see very clearly that if your predictions come to pass, I shall be as popular in certain circles as the proverbial wet dog."

Her roguish eyes appraised him.

"Yes, John; you're totally surrounded now. I suppose, when you realize the enormity of the odds against you, you'll do the decent thing and—"

"Renew his mortgage? Not in a million years!" Parker's voice carried a strident note of finality, of purpose inflexible, and he thumped the pommel of his saddle thrice in emphasis. He was a man who, although normally kind and amiable, nevertheless reserved these qualities for use under conditions not connected with the serious business of profiting by another's loss. Quite early in life he had learned to say "No." He preferred to say it kindly and amiably, but none the less forcibly; some men had known him to say it in a manner singularly reminiscent of the low, admonitory growl of a fierce old dog.

"But, John dear, why are we accumulating all this wealth? Is not Kay our sole heir? Is not—"

"Do not threaten me with Kay," he interrupted irritably. "I play my game according to the time-honored rules of that game. I do not ask for quarter, and I shall not give it. I'm going to do all in my power to acquire the Rancho Palomar under that mortgage I hold—and I hope that young man gives me a bully fight. That will make the operation all the more interesting."

"My dear, the continuous giving of one more chance to the Farrels have proved their undoing. They first mortgaged part of the ranch in 1870; when the mortgage fell due, they executed a new note plus the accrued interest and mortgaged more of the ranch. Frequently they paid the interest and twice they paid half the principal, bidding for one more chance and getting it. And all these years they have lived like feudal barons on their principal, living for to-day, reckless of to-morrow. There's been the history of practically all of the old California families. I am convinced it would be no kindness to Don Miguel to give him another chance now; his Spanish blood would lull him to ease and forgetfulness; he would tell himself he would pay the mortgage *mañana*. By giving him another chance, I merely remove his incentive to hustle and make good."

"But it seems so cruel, John, to take such a practical view of the situation. He cannot understand your point of view and he will regard you as another Shylock."

"Doubtless," he replied; "nevertheless, if we are ever forced to regard him as a prospective son-in-law, it will be comforting to know that even if he lost he made me extend myself. He is a man and a gentleman, and I like him. He won me in the first minute of our acquaintance. That is why I decided to stand pat and see what he would do." Parker leaned over and laid his hand on that of his wife. "I will not play the bully's part, Kate," he promised her. "If he is worth a chance he will get it, but I am not a human Christmas tree. He will have to earn it." After a silence of several seconds he added; "Please God he will whip me yet. His head is bloody but unbowed. It would be terrible to spoil him."

XV

MIGUEL FARREL pulled up his pinto on the brow of a hill which, along the Atlantic seaboard would have received credit for being a mountain, and gazed down into the Agua Caliente basin. Half a mile to his right, the slope dipped into a little saddle and then climbed abruptly to the shoulder of El Palomar, the highest peak in San Marcos County. The saddle was less than a hundred yards wide, and through the middle of it a deep arroyo had been eroded by the Rio San Gregorio tumbling down from the hills during the rainy season. This was the only outlet to the Agua Caliente basin, and Don Mike saw at a glance that Parker's engineers had discovered this, for squarely in the outlet a dozen two-horse teams were working, scraping out the foundation for the huge concrete dam for which Parker had (Continued on page 123)

More Than a Charming Love-Story—One with Humor and Common Sense, Too



The table was between them; Elspeth felt, somehow, that it must be kept between them at all costs. Yet, when he started round it, she seemed paralyzed.

The Unfair Sex

By Royal Brown

Illustrated by Charles D. Mitchell

EDEN had but one man and but one woman, and there was peace. Aboard the *Valasquez*, as she steamed steadily southward, there were two men and one woman—and peace was not. After Eden came love and heart-hurt and jealousy, envy and malice and gossip, and on the *Velasquez*, this April morning, were to be found them all. The heart-hurt and jealousy were hidden under the smiling good-sportsmanship with which the two men played this oldest of games, but the envy and malice were manifest wherever the unfair sex gathered and made barbed comment. It was strange, so they said, that neither Stephen Montgomery West, third, nor Jimmy Macallister, first—Jimmy himself had perpetrated the “first”—could see through Elspeth Wyeth. The italics were theirs.

“But that is just like a man—any man,” majestically mourned Mrs. Burlington Hewitt. “They can’t see beyond the end of their noses.”

Mrs. Burlington Hewitt was making the trip for some mysterious condition that affected what she referred to impressively as “my health.” She was accompanied by her two daughters, sterling girls who, however, had inherited their late father’s nose. Which was unfortunate. Difficult as it may be for a man to see beyond his own nose, it is more difficult still for him to see beyond such noses as the Misses Hewitt possessed.

The word that came to people’s lips when they tried to describe Elspeth Wyeth—and weren’t prejudiced—was “lovely.”

Even Mrs. Burlington Hewitt, pausing after her last remark to watch Elspeth at shuffleboard, was not wholly proof against her charm. Elspeth, with the quick, assured skill of the modern girl, sent her disk skimming toward the board, where it caromed

Jimmy Macallister’s last shot from a plus-ten into a twenty-minus square. Straightening, she thrust back an escaped wisp of hair which was neither red nor gold nor brown, but which miraculously blended these three tones, and smiled at him, mischievously triumphant.

At that moment—as always—above and beyond her undeniable beauty, there was something more, something in her expression or, if one will, her air, that threw a misty loveliness across her face and made the unprejudiced catch their breaths at the sight of her.

Mrs. Burlington Hewitt, however, sniffed. “If I were Mrs. Wynne,” she said austere, “I should remind her that it does not look well for a girl to play alone with two men like that or”—venomously—“to play one against the other like that. She’s altogether too transparent. I’m glad that my daughters were differently brought up.”

It was as well that Mrs. Wynne, with whom Elspeth was making the cruise, did not hear that. As well, that is, for Mrs. Burlington Hewitt. Mrs. Wynne was wicked in repartee. “I am sure,” she would have drawled, “that you need never worry about either of your girls conducting themselves that way.”

Everybody aboard the *Velasquez* knew that Mrs. Wynne was very distantly connected with Elspeth’s family, and only by marriage. They knew that she had money, a great deal of it, and they suspected that even the smart little deck costumes Elspeth wore were gifts from her. And that was the truth.

“Father,” Elspeth had informed Stephen Montgomery West, third, “makes ten thousand a year, but he never collects more than two. He’s a country doctor, you know.”

Stephen didn’t, but at that stage of the game, any bit of

information about her was precious. Stephen had started the trip, which, for him, was to end at Buenos Aires, with full confidence that he would enjoy it. He enjoyed everything. He had enjoyed Yale, where a princely allowance gave free scope to his undoubted talents—talents of the sort that must make him popular wherever he might be. He had enjoyed his experience in France, trenches and all, and now, launched in business, he was prepared to enjoy that.

The general manager of his father's factories, which made shoes by the million and dollars as fast, damned him even while he admitted he liked him.

"You can't help liking him," he told his private secretary. "But he was disorganizing the office with his invitations to dinner and golf and tennis. It was a mean trick to ship him south—if he sells a dollar's worth, I'll eat my hat; but, anyway, he'll be gone a while."

The general manager must have said the same thing to others beside his private secretary, for, as is well known, private secretaries are sphinxes, and the story ran through not only the shoe industry but beyond. Indeed, everybody, but Stephen must have heard it. Jimmy Macallister had. He had recognized Stephen and introduced himself with that instant cordiality that was one of his greatest charms.

"Hosiery?" repeated Stephen. "My line's shoes. Got a hold full of samples." He grinned. "Shoes and socks. We may be able to give each other a lift—what do you say?"

"That's mighty decent of you," Jimmy said, with all sincerity, if with a few mental reservations, not as to giving help but as to receiving it.

"What are you doing now?" demanded Stephen, with a glance at the papers Jimmy had spread out before him.

"Studying my line. There's lots of new numbers——"

"Lord! Do you have to do that?" exclaimed Stephen. Then he smiled. "My father claims his stuff sells itself. I'm going to give him a chance to prove it. You don't plan to work all the way down, do you?"

Jimmy laughed.

"Not exactly. But I've got several books on South America and a sheaf of consular reports I plan to study up."



"I love to watch them," she said suddenly one morning, with a nod toward Stephen and Elspeth. "They she confessed calmly. "I never was the least bit attractive as a girl myself, and not all

"Good night!" breathed Stephen, with real awe. "How do you do it?"

Thus it was that Stephen Montgomery West, third, destined one day—barring Bolshevism and civilization plunged to chaos—to inherit millions, and Jimmy Macallister, first, founder of his own family and fortunes, became acquainted. In spite of different traditions and birth, they had a deal in common. In so far as the externals went, they were both admirable young Americans, each with his share of clean good looks. The one great difference was that Stephen had never been denied anything he *thought* he wanted, and Jimmy had always stubbornly refused to be denied anything he *decided* he wanted.

Friendship between them was swiftly established before either saw Elspeth Wyeth, engaged those first two days in ministering to Mrs. Wynne, who, even in the midst of seasickness, preserved a certain unquenchability of spirit.

"I'm a perfect example of the innate illogic of human nature,"



could no more help gravitating toward Elspeth than iron can resist the magnet. He was born that way.

"The funny thing about them," he added, seizing his opportunity, "is that out of water they have no more sparkle than a sardine boiled in oil."

"Really!" Her eyes widened, and Stephen's fall, swift as Lucifer's, was consummated.

A quarter of an hour later, when Elspeth had tardily remembered that, say what you will—and what Miss Hewitt *was*—she had never been introduced to this most engaging young man, and had murmured something about need of her services below, Stephen burst into Jimmy's stateroom.

"Man, I'm in love!" he exclaimed.

Jimmy looked up.

"The first time—or the last?" he inquired politely.

"The last," maintained Stephen stoutly. "The other times don't count."

"When did it all happen? I suppose she's aboard—"

"Aboard! Man, she must have been aboard this old tub for three days, and I never saw her until fifteen minutes ago."

"Swift work!" commented Jimmy. "If you can sell shoes with the rapidity with which you fall in love—"

"Shoes!" scoffed Stephen. "Can't you think of anything but shoes—"

give me a vicarious sense of romance." As Jimmy's eyes turned to her, she smiled. "I'm a vampire." the clothes in the world could make me so. I never had a real romance in my life—"

she moaned. "I always have been sick every time I've been to sea, and yet I always have perfect faith I won't be this time."

The third day out, however, she was so far recovered as to demand a mirror.

"I don't look the least bit green," she said judiciously. Then, to Elizabeth, "Go up on deck, child—I didn't bring you along to act as a trained nurse."

Elspeth went. The sea had turned a wonderful ultrablue. A shoal of flying-fishes, flashing bits of silver, skimming the unbelievable blue, swept by as she stood at the rail.

"Oh, wonderful!" she breathed, and then blushed her loveliest as she realized she had an audience. "I couldn't help it," she murmured. "Aren't they the loveliest things ever?"

Stephen, lying like a gentleman, said they were. He was gazing, almost raptly, at that which was far lovelier, and which had drawn him from the chair of the younger Miss Hewitt—whose nose was a shade less like her father's—to the rail. He

or socks? Just wait until you see her—"

"I've seen quite a few," suggested Jimmy skeptically.

"You haven't seen her. And when you do—oh, boy, howdy!"

It was characteristic of Stephen that he, quite oblivious that, if his glowing prophecy were fulfilled, he would have a rival, should himself present Jimmy to Elspeth.

"Mr. Macallister," murmured Elspeth most conventionally. But then a dimple appeared at the corner of her lovely mouth, and she looked at Stephen. "Do you know," she declared, "I've already forgotten who introduced you!"

The emphasis on the pronoun was of the slightest, but Stephen did not miss it. He smiled, wholly unabashed.

"It was the flying-fish—although I'm not sure they mentioned my name—"

Elspeth smiled.

"I've already learned it," she assured him. "Several little birds whispered it to me this morning. Aren't you flattered?"

The Unfair Sex

"It depends on what they said," retorted Stephen.

The amusement in her lovely eyes became more apparent.

"Can't you guess?" Stephen, being no fool, could. He blushed under the beautiful brown that tennis at Palm Beach had given him. "I see," she pursued mercilessly, "that you can."

Stephen recovered himself.

"He's the son of West, the big shoe manufacturer, you know," he mimicked. "How," he went on, with mock plaintiveness, "can I hope to be admired for myself alone with that handicap. You won't hold it against me?"

"Has anybody—ever?" she parried.

Before he could answer, she glanced at her wrist-watch.

"You aren't going?" he demanded.

"No," she said; "but you are. Miss Hewitt told me you and she were to play shuffleboard at three. Here she comes."

"Oh, darn!" murmured Stephen unchivalrously.

But being as he was, he met Miss Hewitt half-way.

"I was just coming to look for you," he announced cordially. Elspeth looked at Jimmy.

"Isn't he—inimitable?" she observed.

"If by that you mean likable, I agree with you," he said.

She gave him a quick, approving glance.

"I love the way you men hang together," she said impulsively.

"A woman would not have been able to resist the temptation to cap that with something cutting."

Again she glanced at her watch.

"I must go now," she assured him.

Stephen would have protested, and he might even have secured a stay of execution. But Jimmy only answered her blithe nod in kind and descended to his stateroom. Catalogues were spread over his berth, awaiting assortment, but he gave them only the briefest of glances. The picture Elspeth Wyeth had presented as she teased Stephen filled his thoughts. He admitted at once she was all Stephen had said.

"I can see," he mused, "how a chap like West might be swung off his feet."

Which shows that Jimmy had no idea of what had already happened to him. He was like a man who, with some subtle poison working in him—the simile is not apt, but it will serve—goes about his affairs as usual, and, even when conscious of strange, unsettling symptoms, ascribes them to any cause but the real one. So Jimmy, suffering an unprecedented restlessness and discontent, assured himself that inaction irked him and that he was eager for the voyage to end so that he could get back to work.

"This climate is getting me, too," he added, when books on South America and consular reports lost their power to interest, "and this cabin is like a Turkish bath."

Accordingly, he spent more time on deck. As Stephen did his best to monopolize Elspeth, Jimmy, without understanding just how it happened, found himself delivered to the none too gentle mercies of Mrs. Wynne, now able to be up and about. It was she who deliberately stripped Jimmy of the garment of self-deception that he had woven for himself, and left him quite naked—and appalled.

"I love to watch them," she said suddenly one morning, with a nod toward Stephen and Elspeth. "They give me a vicarious sense of romance." As Jimmy's eyes turned to her, she smiled. "I'm a vampire," she confessed calmly. "I was never the least bit attractive as a girl myself, and not all the clothes in the world could make me so. I never had a real romance in my life—" She paused, amused at his expression. "People do sometimes get married without real romance," she assured him. "There was none in my marriage. And the moment I saw Elspeth, I knew I must have her. I wanted to dress her as she should be dressed, and to watch her romances. She suggests romance, don't you think?"

"Why—yes," Jimmy managed.

"Why—yes," she mimicked. She shifted the subject suddenly. "Tell me about yourself—your work and all that, I mean."

That was like her. She had the royal manner. Jimmy assured her there was nothing much to tell, but she, by deft questioning, made him reveal more than he realized. That which he felt would not interest her—his start as a stock-boy, his development into a salesman, the time he had spent in the service, and his return—didn't overmuch, but what did interest her was what she shrewdly surmised. He plainly had never been in love; he was one of those very modern young celibates of commerce who, starting from nothing, are so fired with ambition that they devote themselves exclusively to the business of getting ahead. In him was that vital spark that raises a man from any level.

"You aren't a college man, then?" she asked. Jimmy shook his head, and she added. "You look like one, somehow."

In her own mind, as she glanced from him to Stephen, she carried the thought further. "Strip them of the trappings of civilization and set them down in Eden, and Eve would have a hard time making a choice between them."

She met Jimmy's eyes.

"Why do you let him monopolize her so?" she demanded.

Jimmy was startled and looked it.

"Monopolize her so?"

"You know perfectly well what I said, and you might, at least, contrive to make things more interesting. I've confessed why I brought her, and I don't want to see the first man she meets walk off with her." Before he could recover himself she rose. "Of course you're in love with her," she said. "Why not admit it?"

In the privacy of her stateroom, she surveyed herself in her mirror. "You're a wicked old woman with a deplorable desire for excitement," she soliloquized. "Anyway, I've given him something to think about."

Of that, there could be no question. Jimmy, fleeing to his stateroom—he felt he must be blushing like a schoolgirl—was thinking hard. That Elspeth had a certain pulse quickening effect on him, that he never went on deck without a curious breathless expectancy, that to see her with Stephen was a form of self-torture were truths he could no longer deny. This was what Mrs. Wynne had seen—he grimly wondered if he had been as transparent to other people—and he supposed he must be in love.

Well, suppose he was! What woman in her senses would prefer him to Stephen? Aside from Stephen's money, there was no resisting him. He was getting along famously with Elspeth; if she weren't in love with him, then he, Jimmy, didn't know silk from lisle. "The less I see of her," he assured himself stubbornly, "the better for me."

He turned swiftly as the cabin door was flung open.

"Busy?" demanded Stephen blithely. "Come on deck. I'm getting up a foursome at deck-golf. Elspeth and I will play you and Miss Hewitt—"

"Can't," said Jimmy briefly. "Sorry."

"Why not?" demanded Stephen. With characteristic impetuosity, he rushed on. "Do you dislike Elspeth?"

Jimmy stared, uncomprehendingly.

"Dislike her?"

"She has an idea you do," explained Stephen. "You sort of avoid her—"

"You sort of monopolize her," retorted Jimmy.

Stephen considered this for a moment; then,

"Look here, Jimmy," he announced: "We'll form a nice, tight little corporation and work together against the field. Fifty-fifty—what do you say?"

"What will she say?" suggested Jimmy.

"Yes—to one of us, I hope," said Stephen.

And so it was that Jimmy, with a strain of Scotch in him, but little, it is to be feared, of young Lochinvar, learned that he was in love, and found himself the acknowledged rival of Stephen. And so, also, it was that Elspeth, her days rigorously divided between two young men who seemed somehow to have segregated her from the rest of their kind, found herself sometimes a little embarrassed, sometimes a little indignant—the criticism of her by her own sex became daily more evident—and always a little amused.

"They seem," she told Mrs. Wynne, "to have cut my day up between them. I wish they would present me with a copy of their schedule—it would simplify matters a lot."

"I can't determine whether I'm to congratulate the engaging Stephen and condole with the determined Jimmy, or vice versa," drawled Mrs. Wynne, with mock plaintiveness. "And it's wearing on me—this continually composing two different sets of speeches."

Elspeth blushed.

"I don't see why it should be either," she retorted. "I don't see why we can't be just good friends—"

"I believe," commented Mrs. Wynne dryly, "that that has been attempted before, but never successfully. You can't dodge love all your life, child."

"I'm not trying to," Elspeth smiled. "But neither am I trying to meet it more than half way."

"It will come the whole way," agreed Mrs. Wynne. "But I can't understand you. Here are two perfectly good young men, and you don't get a thrill. Why is it?"

"Please!" begged Elspeth. "You make me feel almost indecent—"



"I can't determine whether I'm to congratulate the engaging Stephen and condole with the determined Jimmy, or vice versa," drawled Mrs. Wynne, with mock plaintiveness.

"You are impossible," said Mrs. Wynne—and kissed her. A moment later, she added, "I've decided to stop off in Buenos Aires."

Elspeth looked her surprise.

"But you planned——"

"Plans, as you will realize when you are my age, are made to be changed. I've been told that Buenos Aires surprises every visitor by its wealth and magnificence. I'm willing to be surprised, if it's possible."

Elspeth knew very well that wasn't the reason, but she said nothing. Mrs. Burlington Hewitt, however, said plenty.

"It's plain that Mrs. Wynne is determined to go to any lengths to make the match," she announced, as if this were a personal affront. "She has changed her plan and is going to stop at Buenos Aires, just to keep her near him."

From which it would appear that there was but one "him" in Mrs. Burlington Hewitt's mind. This was so. She had learned

The Unfair Sex

Jimmy's financial status and social background, and had thereafter given him no place in her calculations. No girl—not even a girl who had not had the advantage of the Misses Hewitt's careful upbringing—would consider Jimmy, she felt sure, while there was the glorious possibility of entangling Stephen.

Even Jimmy felt that way about it at times. Not because of Stephen's money, but because of the things that money had given—the fine breeding and air of easy assurance that were the basis of his charm. In his heart of hearts, the feeling that Elspeth liked him and *loved* Stephen had taken deep root. The news that she and Mrs. Wynne were to stop over at Buenos Aires gave him a moment of exultation that, however, was short-lived. Stephen would be there, too, and, being Stephen, would have far more time at his disposal than would Jimmy.

"It will only prolong the agony," he assured his rebellious heart.

Then came the last night aboard. He and Elspeth were together, standing at the rail and watching a glorious full moon that simply soared out of the sea. Its magic wove a spell of silence for a time; then she looked up at him.

"To-morrow ends it," she murmured, with a little sigh. He nodded soberly. "I suppose you'll be awfully busy," she hazarded.

"I hope to be."

"I can't imagine Stephen busy," she said. "Or selling shoes. Can you?"

Jimmy couldn't, but he didn't purpose saying so.

"I take it you *can* imagine me selling socks," he evaded.

"Yes, I can. You look as if you had always been doing things."

A heady draft—perhaps!

"Am I to feel flattered—or battered?" he asked, schooling his voice to a lightness he did not feel.

"Flattered!" she said, with emphasis. "Stephen says you're a wizard at salesmanship—that you know your line and all that, and study trade-conditions, while all he knows about shoes"—she smiled—"is that he wears a size ten and that he can tell a right from the left. I wonder why they sent him here."

Jimmy could have told her, but he wouldn't—not if he were to be hanged, drawn, and quartered. And at that instant the ship's bell rang out.

"Eleven o'clock—I must go!" she exclaimed. "Of course I'll see you in the morning."

Her eyes, clear, candid, friendly met his. The moon shone full on her face. A mad impulse to crush her to him and kiss her willy-nilly, if only once, seized and shook him. He struggled, and in an instant was himself again, with her eyes still meeting his confidently, expectantly. It was as Stephen said—one could not dent her friendliness.

"I'm afraid," he said, "that I'll be awfully busy getting my stuff ready for the customs."

Her eyes widened with the shock of this, but she swiftly recovered herself.

"Then it's good-by—and the best of luck," she said very, very gaily—and was gone.

The moon still remained, but it had lost three-quarters of its brilliance and all its magic for him. He lingered, musing—living proof of what love can do to a perfectly normal young man. When love enters the heart, logic flies out of the head. He had hoped, when he said he would be busy, that she might be sorry—and show it. She hadn't. She had said good-by—therefore, she didn't care in the least. It was the end! Such is the stuff love is made of.

In the morning, he saw her, and—the morning presumably having brought counsel—might have recanted had she not passed him with a blithe but subtly distant nod. And from then on he was busy with his trunks, determinedly so, although he accomplished but little, until the ship dropped anchor off quarantine. Then he joined the other passengers in the main cabin, and there Mrs. Wynne beckoned to him.

"You are to look us up and take dinner with us, remember," she told him. Involuntarily Jimmy's eyes went to Elspeth, who was talking with Stephen. "Oh, I know you have mortally offended her in some way," murmured Mrs. Wynne. "But I suppose she maddened you into it. Shall we expect you a week from to-day?"

"But—" began Jimmy, hardly knowing what to say.

"A week, then," Mrs. Wynne went on smoothly. "She will have forgiven you by then, and you can tell us all about your triumphs. Doubtless"—amusement flickered in her blue eyes—"they will impress her. Elspeth loves men who do things, you know." The glance Jimmy gave her, mingling surprise and consternation, drew a smile to her lips. "Once again," she said,

"I have revealed you to yourself. Confess now—you *have* had a lurking hope that, when we reached Buenos Aires, she might get a—a new angle on you and Stephen. Haven't you?"

Jimmy, however, had recovered himself.

"I wonder," he parried, "if you have it in for all men—or just for me."

She smiled.

"In the days of my youth," she said, "I was one of those hardy perennials known as 'wall-flowers,' and I've had it in for men ever since."

Jimmy smiled, too.

"Then why invite me to dinner?"

"Human interest," she flashed back. "You forget my yearning for romance. And the idea that, though knights no longer ride forth to tilt with sword and lance, a modern young knight is willing to substitute shoes and socks is—intriguing, is it not?"

That was hardly the word that occurred to Jimmy. He felt like a fool, and, though he managed to make his escape, he still felt like one when Stephen invaded the privacy of his cabin.

"I've invited Elspeth and Mrs. Wynne to take lunch with me at the Plaza," he announced. "You're invited, too."

"Sorry," said Jimmy. "I've got to rush my trunks through the customs."

"Hang your trunks!" said Stephen. "What's a few hours?"

But Jimmy remained adamant, and finally Stephen departed, promising to see him again soon. Actually, Jimmy saw him sooner than he expected. At three, when he was still hung up in the custom-house, Stephen appeared—Stephen in high hat and Prince Albert and carrying a cane.

"Why, Jimmy!" he exclaimed. "Still here?"

"And likely to be for some time," grunted Jimmy. "The inspectors seem to regard me as a particularly pestiferous sort of human fly." He surveyed Stephen. "You look as if you were returning from a morning wedding."

"Met a chap I used to know at Yale," explained Stephen, with a grin. "He loaned me this regalia. He said the way to pass the customs in a grand rush is to make these lads think you're a gentleman. So I'm trying it."

"I wish you luck," said Jimmy, unconvinced.

Nevertheless, the inspector who had put him off succumbed to Stephen at once. He opened Stephen's trunks, gave them the most casual of glances, and chalked them through. He was courteous, affable, ingratiating.

"Clothes," thought Jimmy, "seem to make the man here."

Stephen returned with the inspector in tow.

"This is Mr. Macallister, a friend of mine," he announced. "He's in a great hurry."

"Oh, yes," said the inspector, as if he had never seen Jimmy before. "At once, forthwith—immediately!" He was proud of his command of English.

So, thanks to Stephen, Jimmy did not spend his declining years in the custom-house as, a few minutes before, he had gloomily prophesied would be his fate. In five minutes his trunks were through, and he departed with Stephen, who, pausing outside, hailed a taxi.

"You're coming to the Plaza, of course—I'm stopping there," he said.

"If you are there, it's a sure sign it's too rich for my blood," said Jimmy. "I can't afford to have my expenses run more than my sales."

Stephen considered that—this angle hadn't occurred to him.

"Well, I'll expect you to dinner, anyway," he said. "I've got a hunch I'm going to like this place, Jimmy."

Later, Jimmy saw how Stephen might. After he had lunched and secured a room in a hotel not so gilded as the Plaza, he strolled about the city. Not for nothing is Buenos Aires called the "Paris of South America." As he paused in the Plaza de Mayo, one of the most beautiful of the city's many squares, he was impressed by the wealth and magnificence everywhere visible. If a city of a million people can be said to have a single note, luxury was certainly that of Buenos Aires.

The dusk was deepening; the lights were twinkling on. Men and women passed—the men displaying that instinctive gallantry, the women that instinctive coquetry, that stressing of sex, which in the Latin is inevitable. And Jimmy, resuming his stroll, squelched what might have been a sigh born of the thought of last night at this time, and set his chin. He was here on business, he sternly reminded himself. Although the promise had not been made in so many words, he knew that if he did as well as the people in the home office expected, he was slated for promotion to the sales-manager's position, that, in fact, it was because he was being groomed for this place (*Continued on page 152*)



As they took their seats at the theater, Hilda forced herself to forget that Eric should have been sitting beside her, and that she was missing him hideously.

She *Always* Wins

A story of the husband, the wife, and the man who fell in love with her

By Albert Payson Terhune Illustrated by Grant T. Reynard

PINERO long ago said that married life's roughest weather comes during the mid-channel stretch, after the glowing years of passionate infatuation have been left behind, and when the beautiful years of tranquil affection and of sweet and tolerant understanding have not yet been sighted. Mid-channel is the shipwreck region.

And this is the solemnest, grimmest, most dramatic truth among all the myriad solemn and grim and dramatic truths that go to make up the mystic woof and warp of the conjugal fabric.

The Caines had been married eleven years—since Eric had been twenty-seven and Hilda twenty. The two were good to look at, fairly well off, blest with tolerable social position as such things go in the ever-shifting sands of New York's upper-central stratum. And they had begun their joint pilgrimage with abundant store of love for each other.

In the early days, love and mutual interest, as well as lack of funds, had kept them inseparable. Then, as Eric's business grew and as the outside world and its numberless interests gnawed at more and more of the couple's time, the old sweet privacy and oneness of purpose began to sag.

In the first years, a single evening spent apart from each other was an Event, and was tinged with homesickness. Now, an entire home evening was more or less of a rarity.

It was Hilda who woke to the extent of the change that had been so gradual yet so complete. She woke to it at the end of

a week when business had kept Eric away from their bijou apartment for not less than four consecutive evenings, and when a conference in Baltimore had exiled him for a day and a night.

Women notice these things more readily and quickly than do men. Hilda mulled the theme over and over in a growingly morbid discontent during the best part of another week before she put it into words for her husband's enlightenment. Thus, in the initial stages of their dispute, she had an unfair advantage of him, being letter-perfect, while he was forced to improvise.

But he got into the stride before long; and by the time Hilda's oft-rehearsed grievances were all voiced, he was ready with a goodly line of retort.

He was cross; he was eloquent; he was pathetic. He stormed a bit, demanding to know if he were a slave or merely a child that she should keep tabs on him. He painted a vivid picture of their present prosperity, contrasting it with the up-hill pull of early days, and attributing it to the long hours of overtime work which kept him at the financial grindstone night after night that she might loaf through life in luxurious idleness. He said many things.

Recovering her breath, Hilda said many things more. And the quarrel left them both pretty much as it found them.

But, the next evening, when Eric telephoned he would be detained late at the office, Saul Venner chanced to call up. Several times Saul had happened to do this, and usually on such

nights as Eric was from home. Always Hilda had told him with primness and with no regret that Eric was away and that she was going to bed. To-night, tweaked by some queer feminine imp of resentment, she said:

"Eric is out. But I'm not. And I'm horribly lonely. Won't you drop in and amuse me?"

Saul offered the taxi-bandit double fare for double speed from his club to the Caine apartment.

That was how it began. But it did not take the wonted course of such affairs. Chiefly because Hilda still loved her own husband and because she did not love Saul Venner.

Saul was a lifelong friend of Caine's. He was a more or less constant guest at Eric's home. For the best part of three years he had been in love with Hilda. Not being a born fool, and knowing more than a little about women, he had given no faintest sign of his feelings. But he had sat back and watched—had watched none the less vigilantly because of his seeming carelessness. He was waiting for one of two things: for Hilda's first yawn or for Eric's first dereliction. Eric's new absences from home had promised to be a fair substitute for either of these. And Hilda's telephone made good the promise.

Yes; Venner knew women. And, even now that he had taken to dropping in at the Caines' during Eric's evenings of absence, he did not advance his lines precipitately or even visibly. He contented himself, for the time, with strengthening his position and making himself necessary to the lonely and resentful wife. And, as the weeks slid on, he felt he was succeeding.

An odd sort of intimacy began to develop between Hilda and himself—an intimacy which kept itself sexless because of Hilda's own attitude toward him. And, for all his lore in such matters, Venner could not, to save his battered soul, decide whether this attitude of hers was genuine and unconscious or consummately clever. He began to tend to the latter belief. And he waited an overt move to confirm him in the idea—an overt move which should signal him that it was safe to go into action. Presently the move was made. This was the manner of its making:

With wistful eagerness, Hilda had looked forward to the eleventh anniversary of her wedding. Every one of the former anniversaries had been a gala day. And Hilda prepared to make this eleventh celebration even more festal. She and Eric talked it all over and mapped out the festivities.

Eric was to take the whole day off from business. In the morning, they were to go motoring to a Westchester inn which had been the scene of several such outings. There they were to lunch and spend most of the afternoon. In the evening, they were to dine together, down-town, thence to go to the theater and wind up the day with supper at the noisiest cabaret. Into the preparations Hilda threw all her enthusiasm. So, apparently, did Eric.

Yet, on the evening before the anniversary, Eric came home very early and very mournful. Three men, a committee from a Denver syndicate from which the firm expected big business, had just arrived in town, and had telephoned asking him to a conference and to luncheon on the following day. Eric explained just how necessary this syndicate was to his firm's success, and just how impossible it would be to refuse its committee's summons.

Hilda tried hard to be plucky and wifely and helpful about it, and not to say nasty things or even to let her glumly disappointed husband see how hurt she was. Then she went into her own room and took from the mirror-corner the two seats for the next evening's show and looked lovingly at them and sought to persuade herself that the dinner and the theater and the midnight supper were, after all, by far the jolliest part of the celebration and that these, at least, were left to her and Eric. So she concentrated her anticipations on the evening's spree.

At six, on the anniversary evening, she was dressed in her very prettiest and was waiting eagerly for Eric's return from the office. She had laid out his evening things, and had gone so far as to bark her finger-nails by putting studs in a dress shirt. She was taking his evening shoes out of their trees—and rejoicing mildly in this



As the door opened, they were aware of a veritable bedlam of

bit of affectionate valeting—when the telephone-bell rang. The call was from Eric's secretary, who droned over the wire,

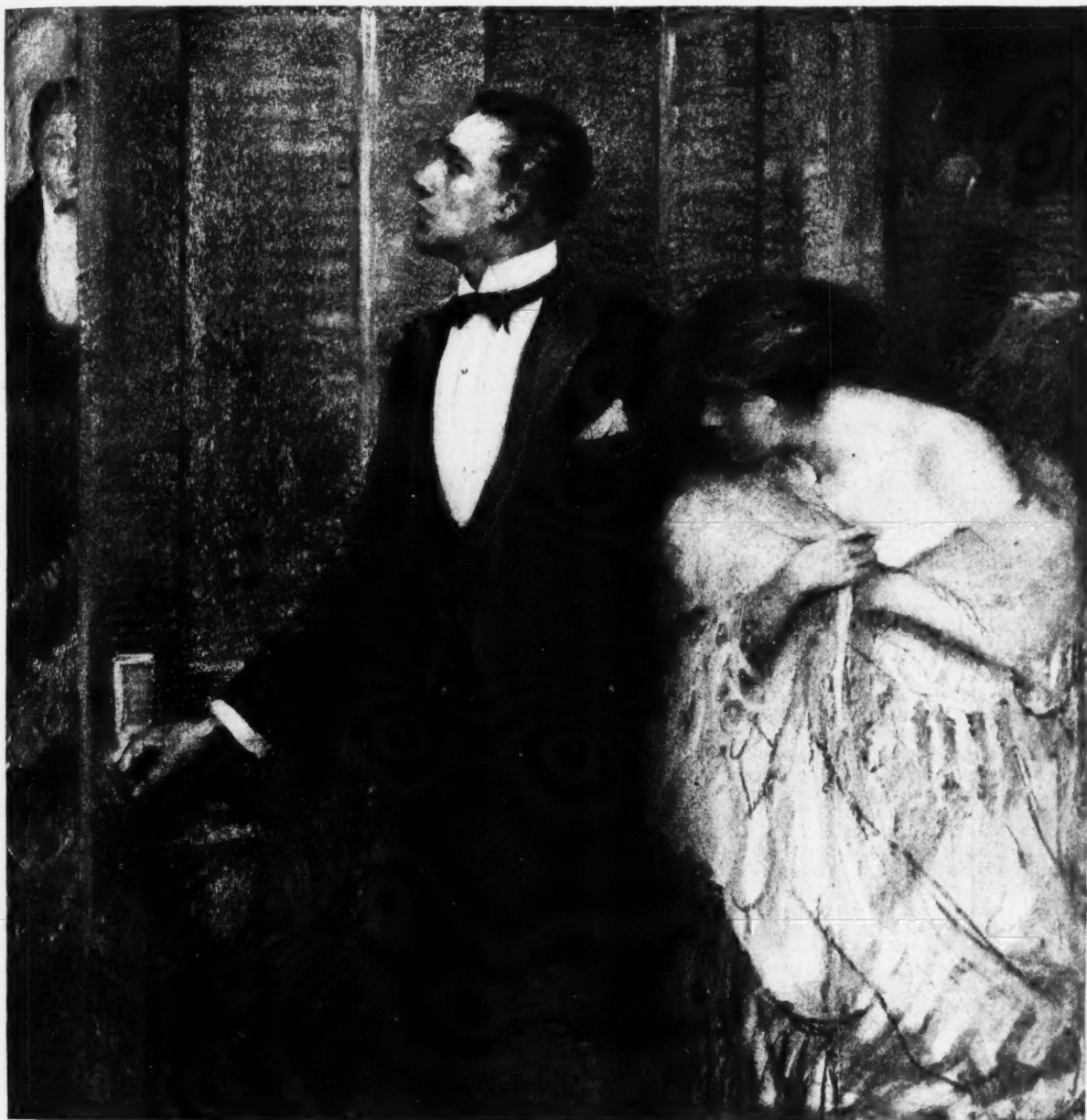
"Mr. Caine directed me to call up and say he has been detained all day with the Denver committee and that he will not be able to finish his business with them until after midnight—"

"Tell Mr. Caine I must talk to him, please!" cut in Hilda, trying to speak steadily and with some semblance of calm. "With him, personally. Right away, please!"

"I'm very sorry, indeed, Mrs. Caine," droned the secretary; "but Mr. Caine is still in conference. And at such times he always leaves orders that he—"

Hilda slammed the receiver down on the hook, and stood glaring at the luckless instrument in a dire hatred which, by rights, should have been divided between her husband and his secretary instead of being wasted on a mere telephone.

For an instant, she wanted to cry, like a disappointed and neglected little child. The next moment, she could not have cried if she wanted to. She longed for the power to sweep that prosy Denver committee into the Atlantic. From this, her misery and rage concentrated gradually but very firmly upon Eric Caine. He must sacrifice her and her promised happiness to a measly, dusty, sordid business conference! And he expected to get away with that!



screaming women and swearing men and running feet, and of scuffling and of smashed furniture and tinkling glass.

Righteous indignation blazed higher and hotter in Hilda's brain. It seared the childish yearning to cry. It hurled lurid thunderbolts at her recreant spouse. It awakened in her a crazy longing to punish him in some way—to get even with him, to show him that she was not meekly dependent on his business leisure for every good time she wanted to have. And in a minute more her plan was formed—her plan of dire revenge.

Going back to the telephone, she lifted the receiver as Salome might have upreared the severed head of the Baptist, and she called up Saul Venner at his rooms. With pleased surprise in his voice, he replied to her staccato greeting.

"Why, hello!" he exclaimed. "I thought you and Eric were off on some sort of jamboree together for the day. Didn't you say you and he were going to—"

"Yes," she made answer curtly; "I said so. He said so, too. And we were. But we didn't. He'd rather talk bonuses and commissions and—and things with three people who came all the way from Denver to spoil this day for me. They've succeeded nicely in spoiling it thus far. But they aren't going to spoil another hour of it. Not one hour or half-hour more of it. That is—unless you've got some poky other engagement or—"

"I haven't," he assured her. "What can I do?"

"What can't you do?" she retorted, in a tone that sent hot

little thrills through the man who was seeking to read so much more in her voice than was crystallized into her mere words. "You can do everything. *Everything!* I have the theater seats Eric and I were going to use to-night. Will you take me to the show? And afterward—"

"Will I?" burred Venner. "I—"

"And afterward," pursued Hilda, "will you take me to supper somewhere? Will you? Not to a cabaret with made-to-order hilarity, or to a stodgy restaurant where the waiters move about like pall-bearers—but to some place that's—that's different. Some place that's—that's—that's well, *risqué!* Will you?"

It was nearly a second before Saul Venner could school his flaming voice to the needful easiness of diction as he said:

"Certainly. I know just the sort of place. And—"

"Oh, thank you ever so much!" returned Hilda, in real gratitude, glad that her proposition had not shocked him, and that his loyalty to Eric did not preclude his accepting. "And I'll be ready any time after eight. Good-by."

She hung up the receiver before he could suggest that they dine together. She did not want Saul to suggest that. Just now—until she should be able to get herself more steadied—she knew she would not be able to swallow a mouthful of food. She went back into her dressing-room and posed stormily before the pier-glass.

"I'm going to the theater with him!" she announced—a bit with the same manner wherein a child sings when passing through a dark alley at night. "I'm going to the theater with him! And I'm going to flirt with him, too! See if I don't! I'll show Eric how safe it is to treat me this way. And afterward I'm going to supper with him. Somewhere it isn't quite respectable. A place, maybe, where the cabaret people sing off-color songs in French, and where the chorus marches round the tables and all that. We won't come home till—well, certainly not till after twelve. And I'll tell Eric just where I've been, and how improper it all was. And I'll—I'll laugh when I tell him. Like this—"

She essayed a laugh of great recklessness and scorn—a laugh such as a fallen angel might shock high heaven with. To an impartial listener, the effect would have been just a little reminiscent of a Persian kitten's attempt to growl like a man-eating tiger. But to Hilda herself it was very real indeed. It thrilled her. It almost scared her. And she looked in admiring interest at the slanted eyes and the coldly smiling lips in her mirrored reflection. She was a vampire—a woman whose own heart had been slain, and who henceforth would slay the fond hearts of men. Hilda scarce recognized herself in this new and desperate rôle. She was quite sure Eric would not have recognized her. Eric had been wont to call her "baby." "Baby," forsooth! "Demon" were a far fitter title for such a woman as she was planning to be.

With precisely the right degree of devotion and respect in his perfect manner, Saul arrived promptly at eight o'clock. During the ten minutes before he and Hilda descended to the taxi, he learned, in all its shocking details, the story of Eric's remissness. And his sympathy was as balm to the thoroughly angry woman. Indeed, his sympathy revived all her treacherously ebbing wrath against her husband and her terrible plan to punish him.

As they took their seats at the theater, Hilda forced herself to forget that Eric should have been sitting beside her, and that she was missing him hideously. She talked with galvanized animation until the curtain went up. Then she tried to lose herself in the intricacies of the play.

She succeeded so well that, in one stirring scene, she did not remember it was Venner instead of Caine who sat next to her. And unconsciously she let her gloved hand slip into his, as was her way with Eric in exciting moments at the theater. The ardor of her escort's response roused her to a memory of who he was. She made as if to draw her seared fingers away from his lovely pressure. Then, remembering her vow to flirt with him, she let her hand stay where it was—this as a matter of vengeful duty. For the caress of Saul's palm and tense fingers meant nothing to her except that he was making one of her rings dig uncomfortably into her middle finger's knuckle.

When the lights went up after the act, she noted amusedly that Venner was looking at her with a different aspect than ever before—with something foolishly proprietary in his eyes, and with an air of devotion that gave his ascetic face an almost vapid expression. Also, into his voice had crept a new note—a note that puzzled her. However, this was apparently his method of seconding her leads at flirtation. And she was glad he did not leave all the sorry work to her.

During the next act, it was Venner's hand which sought and found hers, slightly to her annoyance. But she really could not blame him after her own unconscious encouragement. So she suffered him to hold it—tightly.

The play over, he guided her to a taxi-cab and said to the driver:

"Madrillo's. Forty-sixth."

"Madrillo's?" she complained, as the taxi veered off the glare of Broadway and into one of the side streets which serve as myriad black legs to the White Light centipede. "Madrillo's?" I asked you to take me to some—some *risqué* place for supper. Some place that was 'different.' I know Madrillo's. Eric and I dined there a couple of times last year. It's ever so proper."

"Where did you sit?" he asked, not at all chagrined by her chiding. "Up-stairs or down? And did you go in at the Forty-sixth Street entrance or the Forty-seventh Street?"

"We ate down-stairs, of course," she said. "I didn't know there was an up-stairs to it."

"There is," he said cryptically, adding: "You went in at the Forty-seventh Street entrance. You see, down-stairs, and at that side, Madrillo's is just a big restaurant, and as proper as a lecture-hall. Up-stairs, and at the Forty-sixth Street side, is where the supper-rooms are. It's the up-stairs part of the establishment that has made old Madrillo a millionaire. That's where I've reserved a—a table. There's a big staircase running from the far end of the down-stairs restaurant to the main hallway up-stairs. But it's never used. There are red-plush ropes across it. It's been there since Madrillo took the place over. But that disused staircase is the only link between the up-stairs and down-stairs Madrillo's. It— Here we are!" he finished, as the taxi-cab chugged to a stop.

A silk-shrouded glass door was opened at their approach. As they stepped into the shaded hallway, a dark little man peered sharply at them, then bowed and passed them on to a hovering waiter, who preceded them up a narrow winding stair.

Up the squashily soft stair-carpet they moved in the pussy-footed waiter's wake. At the head of a single flight, the waiter led the way along a faintly fragrant corridor, dimly illumined by indirect roseate lighting. At the far end of the hallway, Hilda could see the head of the main staircase, and a babel of chattering voices reached her from the restaurant below. But she and Venner did not reach the head of these stairs. Just on the hither side of the stairway, they were halted before one of a double rank of closed doors which lined the corridor. The waiter pushed open this door on silent hinges and stood impressively aside for them to enter.

Hilda went into the room, closely followed by Venner.

"You may serve at once," she heard Saul say to the waiter, who bowed again and departed, shutting the door softly behind him.

She glanced about her. For a moment, she fancied she had been ushered into some sort of retiring-room where she was supposed to lay aside her wraps before going on to the main supper-room. The apartment was tiny, but exquisitely furnished, and deftly lighted by the same pervasive rosy glow she had noticed in the hall.

Hilda's amusedly puzzled eyes focused on a daintily appointed supper-table in the smaller of the room's two alcoves. The table was

set for two. Cocktails had been poured. A bottle reclined on the floor in a silver pail of ice. *Hors d'œuvres* were already on the table.

"Why," she said, astonished, "the supper-room must be full!

See—they've had to set one of the tables in here. What a horribly lonely time some man and girl are going to have!"

"This is a supper-room," corrected Venner, looking covertly at her, uneasy as to the genuineness of her words. "It is like all the rooms on this corridor. You—you said you wanted something 'different,' you know," he defended himself, under the blank wonder of her stare. "Something *risqué*, you said. And—"



She had laid out his evening things, and had gone so far as to bark her finger-nails by putting studs in a dress shirt.



Eric cut in on her very first sentence with studied formality. "To-morrow," said he. "I shall be more myself then. I shall have had time to think—to be more just. Go to bed, please. To-morrow morning."

"Saul Venner!"

There was no outraged modesty in the explosive interruption. Nothing but stark amaze—incredulity—contempt. Yet under her words and under the look that so perfectly matched their timbre, the man lost some of his massive calm.

"I'm sorry if you don't like it," he mumbled, speaking and feeling more like a gawky office-boy than a Lothario. "I thought—you said you—"

Under that odd gaze of hers, he fell silent again. He was angry through and through for his own rank bashfulness.

It was Hilda who broke the miserable brief silence. Gathering up the wrap she had laid aside, she turned toward the door.

"We'll go, now, please," she said.

That was all. Yet it stirred him once more to fight for what he had so lately told himself was already his own.

"Listen," he began roughly, stepping between her and the door: "You're no schoolgirl, you know. You asked me to take you to supper at—"

"I know I did," she answered almost repentantly, and moving doorward as though she did not see him barring the way. "I know I did. And I'm sorry I put it so awkwardly that you could misunderstand. And now, shall we go?"

In spite of himself, the man slipped aside at her advance. Deeper and deeper into his unwilling senses burned an impression of having said or done something unspeakable in the presence of a clear-eyed child. He had a morbid yearning to kick himself.

She Always Wins

"A man can make an exact study of woman-science all his life," he muttered sulkily, as he reached forward to open the door for her. "He can learn their crazy language and everything about them. And then, when he knows it all, he is due to meet some woman—some woman whom God made—who shows him he doesn't know a thing and that he's a slimy beast besides. I'll take you home. I don't suppose you care to go anywhere else."

As he spoke, he swung wide the thick door.

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For some seconds, unheeded either by Hilda or her escort, their ears had been assailed by a distant discordant noise so muffled by the closed door as to be negligible.

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But Venner knew what had happened. He saw, too, the cordon of square-shouldered and square-toed men forming at the top of the main stairway and at the far end of the hall, and roughly shoving back the unfortunates who tried to scamper past them. Swiftly he caught Hilda by the arm and pulled her into the room they had just quitted. Shutting the door behind them, he faced the astounded woman.

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The door was flung wide. A man darted into the room. Hilda's bemusedly unbelieving senses had hardly time to recognize her husband before Eric, in one lightning series of gestures, caught Venner by the shoulder, whirled him bodily out into the seething hallway, shut the door behind him, and turned to face his errant wife.

"Er—Eric!" croaked Hilda, now quite certain she was in the center of a nightmare wherein everything weirdly terrific was possible. "Eric! How—"

Her husband paid no attention to her stammered words. He was as scarlet as Venner had been ghastly. His eyes were ablaze. His lips were a gash set in the red grimace of his face. And he was gazing on the shrinking woman as on a repulsive animal. He did not give her time to say more. Harshly, rapidly, he spoke.

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"Eric!" she cried, in heart-broken protest, as she fought to choke back her sobs. "Eric! You don't suppose—you don't for one vile minute believe that we—that I—"

"Of course not!" he snarled. "You both came here thinking it was the Y. M. C. A. Everybody does. We can settle that later. I—"

The door banged open. On the threshold stood a policeman with a note-book. Beside him was a plain-clothes man. Eric turned suavely to greet them.

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Five minutes later, pushing through a gigglingly gloating sidewalk crowd, Eric piloted his shivering wife to a taxi-cab, pushed her into it ahead of him, and followed her aboard.

Thrice during the awful million-year homeward trip, Hilda essayed hysterically to speak. And every time, by a single curt word of command, Eric silenced her. Apart from that, his own lips did not move once from their iron line.

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By the first gleam from the reading-lamp he was aware of a man reclining in a big chair by the dying library fire.

The uninvited midnight guest arose lazily and faced him. It was Saul Venner.

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"I told one of your maids," Venner was (Continued on page 117)



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PHOTOGRAPH BY APPEL

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(page 111)



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PHOTOGRAPH BY AYEDA



*M*ARTHA LORBER, première danseuse of "Mecca," is a pupil of Fokine, the famous Russian ballet-master.

MARY HAY gaily
sings and dances the
brette rôle in a new mus-
ical comedy called "Sally."

PHOTOGRAPHS BY CAMPBELL STUDIO 51





ROSE ROLANDA does the Samoan "gold-stick" folk-dance in "The Rose Girl."

*A delightful bit
of sheer nonsense*

By

Frank R. Adams

What's *It* All About?

Illustrated by
Howard Chandler Christy

"Of course, it's awfully nice to have a quiet wedding," the bride remarked, "but I never dreamed that anything could be as quiet as this."

The judge stood all ready to tie the knot—it was in his office—and the best man and the best woman (she selected the title herself, being dissatisfied with the shop-worn appellation: "matron of honor") were straightening their necktie and patting their lovely blond hair, more nervous than the featured players—much more nervous, perhaps because they both knew from experience that the poor fish now nibbling at the hook were about to get the surprise of their lives.

The best man was a substitute. The office was to have been held by the bride's brother, who was also the groom's best friend, but he was still in the army, and something had gone wrong with his leave at the last minute. So the matron of honor's husband had been dragged in, with his ears laid back, to act as second for the challenger.

It was the groom's idea—this quiet wedding—and he felt mildly apologetic. A quiet wedding is always the groom's idea, but he is very seldom able to put it across. The fact that this bride was an orphan gave more power to his elbow.

"It may appear quiet, Marge," he explained, "but it's just as deadly as if we had a seventy-piece orchestra and a bishop."

"I wasn't thinking so much of the ceremony itself," Margery returned, "but of the whole thing. No one has objected to our marrying. You were never kicked out of our house. I've never been jealous—"

"But I have," interrupted Joe.

"That doesn't count." She suppressed his contribution as negligible.

"It's too late to jazz this thing up now," Joe regretted. "And the judge looks as if he expected us to throw her into gear and go ahead. Attention! Squads right! Let's go!"

Simplicity was the key-note. Ten steps, and they were there. Ten seconds later, the judge had begun.

And then, ten seconds after that, the door of his office opened, and some one said conventionally,

"Stop!"

The visitor, who had forced his way in past the judge's private secretary in the outer office, kept his right hand in his coat pocket in the suggestive fashion of one who can shoot from there without drawing.

Not for nothing was the judge an assiduous reader of Western fiction. He stopped as requested.

This chap was a Westerner. You could tell that from the defiant way in which he wore his derby. Yes; he was a Westerner all right—mahogany complexion and all. His mustache, drooping, was the color of alkali dust; his tight trousers, pressed though they were, could not conceal the riding-muscles of his thighs, and his black broadcloth coat threatened to split if anybody made him just one-millionth of an inch madder.



"There is who?" demanded Joe Kelley, instantly interested.

"My own darling," Phyllis threw over her shoulder excitedly: "my own darling Joe Kelley—my husband!"

"You're Mr. Joseph C. Kelley, aren't you?" he inquired, picking out unerringly the chief mover in the quiet wedding.

"I am," Joe admitted, with becoming modesty—modesty that was almost trepidation.

"What? Talk loud when you speak to me. I plumb ruined my hearing at St. Mihiel, and if I didn't get what you said, I might shoot before I heard you the second time."

"Yes; I'm Joe Kelley," the groom repeated, nodding his head vigorously to remove any doubts as to his affirmative intent.

"And this was to have been your wedding?" the rancher inquired, with ominous politeness.

"Is my wedding," Joe corrected firmly and loudly. "We might have sent you an invitation, had we known that you were interested, and also if we had any idea what your name is."

"My name is Clint Loomis—last name is the same as Phyllis Loomis, the girl you promised to marry—reason for similarity of name is a peculiar one—I'm Phyllis's father."

"Mr. Loomis, glad to know you," Joe assured him easily, extending his hand.

"No, you don't!" Mr. Loomis backed away with his right hand still in his pocket. "I'll shake hands with you after you and Phyllis are married and not before."

"A pleasure long deferred," Joe murmured politely, *sotto voce*.

But the deaf man heard the unexpected—they often do.

"Not deferred as long as you probably think," he consoled. "Phyllis is waiting in the hallway. And her brother Henry is on his way from the license office down at the city hall. I told her to wait and come in when he got here. There's no use having any preliminaries, and I'm here to hold the procession till all the actors are in line."

Joe turned to his almost bride and observed humorously,

"You were objecting to the mildness of our ceremony. How does this strike you?"

Margery shrank away from him.

"You viper!" she shot at him.



ROSE ROLANDA does the Samoan "gold-stick" folk-dance in "The Rose Girl."

52

PHOTOGRAPHED BY KATHLEEN MURRAY

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"There is who?" demanded Joe Kelley, instantly interested.
"My own darling," Phyllis threw over her shoulder excitedly; "my own darling Joe Kelley—my husband!"

"You're Mr. Joseph C. Kelley, aren't you?" he inquired, picking out unerringly the chief mover in the quiet wedding.

"I am," Joe admitted, with becoming modesty—modesty that was almost trepidation.

"What? Talk loud when you speak to me. I plumb ruined my hearing at St. Mihiel, and if I didn't get what you said, I might shoot before I heard you the second time."

"Yes; I'm Joe Kelley," the groom repeated, nodding his head vigorously to remove any doubts as to his affirmative intent.

"And this was to have been your wedding?" the rancher inquired, with ominous politeness.

"Is my wedding," Joe corrected firmly and loudly. "We might have sent you an invitation, had we known that you were interested, and also if we had any idea what your name is."

"My name is Clint Loomis—last name is the same as Phyllis Loomis, the girl you promised to marry—reason for similarity of name is a peculiar one—I'm Phyllis's father."

"Mr. Loomis, glad to know you," Joe assured him easily, extending his hand.

"No, you don't!" Mr. Loomis backed away with his right hand still in his pocket. "I'll shake hands with you after you and Phyllis are married and not before."

"A pleasure long deferred," Joe murmured politely, *sotto voce*.

But the deaf man heard the unexpected—they often do.

"Not deferred as long as you probably think," he consoled. "Phyllis is waiting in the hallway. And her brother Henry is on his way from the license office down at the city hall. I told her to wait and come in when he got here. There's no use having any preliminaries, and I'm here to hold the procession till all the actors are in line."

Joe turned to his almost bride and observed humorously, "You were objecting to the mildness of our ceremony. How does this strike you?"

Margery shrank away from him.

"You viper!" she shot at him.

Joe recoiled as if he had been stung.
 "You're not taking this thing seriously, are you, Marge? Can't you see that this is some actor the fellows have got to pull off a joke on us?"

"Is it?" Margery looked doubtful.

"Of course it is! I never saw this guy with the tight pants before in my life."

"How about Phyllis?"

"Phyllis"—that's a pretty name for a girl, isn't it?"

"Much prettier than just plain Margery," sniffed the owner of the more serviceable name in a huff.

"But there isn't any Phyllis. That's all a bluff."

The Westerner laughed unpleasantly. Joe didn't like the sound of that laugh. It scared him more than the intimation that there was a revolver in the intruder's pocket which was pointed at his own wish-bone. He had a horrible misgiving. Perhaps this preposterous claim had better be investigated.

"How did you find me here?" he asked, as a first step.

"It was a cinch." Same unpleasant laugh. "You kept this wedding pretty quiet. There was nothing in the papers about it—except in the marriage-license column. I always read that and the cattle-market report, which is why I take the city papers."

The bride turned upon the helpless Joe with reproachful fury.

"So that is why you wanted a quiet wedding? To think that I let you dupe me like that!"

Mr. Loomis hadn't heard all of her speech, but he gathered its import from her manner.

"Oh, he's deep, I tell you," he assured her. "To my mind, you're mighty lucky to be rid of him. I wanted to plug him as soon as we heard what he was up to, but Phyllis wouldn't hear of it, and I ain't got the heart to deny her anything. She says she'd rather have him even if he is a scoundrel than anybody else. She used to save every kitten that was born on the ranch, and now I've spoiled her so I wouldn't dare kill anything she wants for a pet."

The door again burst open, and a perspiring young man, not quite so Western as the first interrupter, flung himself into the room. He was a tall, somewhat immature youth.

"I got it, dad!" he shouted, with painstaking distinctness. "The clerk made a lot of trouble, but I finally persuaded him."

"He ain't dead?" the father inquired, with mingled anxiety and pride.

"No; just a first-aid case. Is this Phyllis's intended?"

"Yes; even if he doesn't seem to intend it himself," the father replied. "You hold him, and I'll get Phyllis"—this as he went out the door.

The young man beamed upon his presumable brother-in-law.

"You don't look like the kind of chap who would play an ornery trick like this on sis. But, at that, I guess you'd have to be pretty good to fool a queen like Phyllis, anyway."

"A queen?" Margery took a hand in the conversation. "Do I understand that your sister is a very beautiful girl?"

The youth grinned and nodded.

"She got all the beauty in our family and a lot besides. I suppose I don't appreciate her as much as an outsider would, but even I think she beats 'em all."

Margery didn't ask, "Is she prettier than I?" but she must have looked as if she wanted to, because Henry Loomis went on:

"Of course, she's a different type from yourself. You're a brunette, and Phyllis is a subdued blonde, the kissable, cuddly kind. You're medium tall, and Phyllis is only a little thing—every man wants to pick her up and run off with her until he discovers that she packs a wallop of her own that has nothing to do with her size. But I guess it ain't good form to praise up your own kin this way. Besides, I suspect I'm being what sis calls 'tactless.'"

He was, but Margery wouldn't admit it, and Joe was, for the moment, a conversational zero, his mind being occupied in vainly grappling with the problem as to what had hit him.

The grappling was not very good, and he had not gotten very far when the Westerner came in again, leading his daughter by the hand. Following them came a rather pretty child of about four years—presumably feminine gender.

At sight of Phyllis, Margery announced, with a voice dangerously near to hysterics,

"I'll not stay here another instant!" If she hadn't been so mad, she certainly would have cried, and probably she did, anyway, as soon as she got by herself. "Come, Helen and Tom!" she addressed her cohorts, the best man and woman.

"Listen, Marge—" began Joe.

"Don't ever speak to me again!" She struck at his detaining hand.

"It's all right, young woman," Mr. Loomis assured her. "He won't bother you none." He stepped suggestively between Joe and his bride-to-have-been.

It's not to be wondered that Margery nearly exploded after having satisfied her curiosity as to what that "odious, notoriety-seeking Loomis woman" looked like. Down

deep in her heart, Margery, up to that time, had believed Joe's statement that it was some kind of joke or a blackmailing scheme. One glance at Phyllis Loomis, and she knew better.

Phyllis was real; she was earnest, just like life, and a thousand times prettier. She was more than that—she was stunning. And wistful, too, at the same time. No woman could ever forgive her for existing. If you belonged to her own sex, you longed instantly to wring her neck. Just the tender curl of her upper lip would make it justifiable homicide, and the rose-petal hue and texture of her visible skin inspired a longing to see how it would look all scratched up.

And she hadn't toned down any of her attractiveness by the way she dressed, either. Not unless black velvet is unbecoming to blondes—that and a black-lace waist. Angels, have mercy on women like Phyllis! They can't expect any from other women.

Margery had a photographic eye, and she absorbed every detail of Phyllis's appearance as she swept from the room.

"Let's get at this," suggested

the rancher, as soon as the opposition had betaken itself from the field. "Judge, make 'em fast."

"But wait, father!" his daughter shouted, in consternation.

"Wait—nothing! You've waited too long. Marriage first, and the waiting afterward."

"Look here," supplemented Joe: "You aren't going to make me marry a girl I don't want to—"

"I don't know what you're saying," Mr. Loomis said indifferently, "and you've got to quit mumbling your words when you come to live on the ranch, but, for the present, it don't make a particle of difference."

"But—"



and Chandler, Chicago, 1926



The Westerner came in again, leading his daughter by the hand. Following them came a rather pretty child of about four years—presumably feminine gender.

"Judge, begin!" The Westerner really produced his gun from his pocket. Quite unexpectedly, it was an automatic. And he threw back the slide which prepared it for the first shot. "I've got to catch a train back home in thirty minutes, but I'm going to leave my daughter happy if I have to put everybody else in the hospital to do it."

Either the sound of his voice, which was roaring like an aeroplane motor now, or else the sight of the pistol frightened the child, who had hitherto stood quietly by, and it began to cry.

Loomis didn't hear it at first.

"Judge, begin!"

The judge looked for a way out. There wasn't any. He asked the momentous question.

"Do you take—" etc. Joe looked for a way out. There still wasn't any. So he answered in the affirmative.

The child could no longer be ignored. Even the deaf man heard the shrill screams.

"Quiet that child, Phyl!" he directed. "You can do it better'n Henry can, and I can't lay down my gun."

So Phyllis gathered the infant up into her arms and whispered soothing and immediately effective words to it while the judge skimmed through the ritual.

It was a touching picture—the beautiful young woman with the youngster cuddled close to her bosom—rather unusual for a marriage, but this was not in the least a conventional ceremony.

"There—that's all neat and tidy," Mr. Loomis gleed, when it was over. "Here's your wedding present, Phyl—kiss your dad—and here's my gun. You're more apt to need it than I am. Through the fleshy part of the leg is as good a place as any, just to let 'em know you mean business. There's rooms engaged for you over at the Hotel Draymore. Wire if you need anything, and come home when you get ready. All right, Henry; we've got to get a-going or we won't be there in time to save our wheat this year."

"Daddy—don't leave me!"

"It's all right, Phyl. You've got to get used to it. You can handle that fellow easy. He's the kind that makes a wonderful husband after you catch 'em, just like I did," he continued, hurriedly and modestly. Evidently, Mr. Loomis preferred the sound of his own voice to all other earthly noises. Perhaps, in order to be certain what a conversation was about, he found it wise to monopolize it.

He was still talking as he dragged Henry out of the door.

The baby was asleep, and Phyllis deposited it carefully in the judge's chair. Then the two young people looked steadily at one another for a moment.

"I never saw you before," Joe declared, shaking his head.

"And I never saw you before," she replied, with equal candor. "You're not the right one."

"Not the right what?"

"Not the right Joe Kelley."

"My dear young lady," interposed the judge, "why on earth did you let me perform this marriage under the mistaken idea that I was administering belated justice, when, in reality, I have been accessory to a hideous conspiracy?"

"It isn't a conspiracy."

Phyllis observed, more cheerful now that some one else was worried about it.

"Father meant well, but he is a little impetuous. He bases his life and conduct on his idea of the late Colonel Roosevelt, but he doesn't hear well enough since the war always to be quite sure before he goes ahead."

"This is terribly embarrassing." The judge was genuinely distressed. He was a deliberate person, as befits an ornament of the bar and bench, and he was not in the habit of making errors. "If Mrs. Kelley will step into my private sanctum for a minute, I should like a word with Mr. Kelley."

Mrs. Kelley obliged. With her out of the way, the two men could be as gloomy as they wished.

"Now, how do I get out of this?" Joe demanded.

"Are you quite sure you wish to get out of it?" questioned the judge. "Of course, I'm a bachelor myself, but I've heard that all women are more or less alike, and, judging from appearances, your present legal wife is a very fair representative of her sex. The other one, of course, is somewhat larger—"

The look on Joe Kelley's face silenced further comparison. "Good heavens, Judge, a man doesn't select his life-mate by size or even by appearances! It's something in here"—he thumped his aorta—"that tells you when you've found the right one."

The judge still wished to present both sides of the case.

"You've got to keep in mind that the other one just said she never wanted you to speak to her again, and this girl, your wife, is a bird in the hand, so to speak. If you really want a wife, this may be your only chance."

What Joe might have said to this was banished forever from his mind by the melodramatic appearance in the outer doorway of a young man in the uniform of an officer of the American army.

"Stand up on your feet, you pup!" he commanded, with hushed intensity. Both men rose obligingly. "I'm speaking to Joe Kelley, the man who has ruined my sister's life."

The judge, relieved, sat down again.

"Sam!" said Joe, advancing with welcome in his eye. "Congratulations! You've got your commission."

"What's a commission to me," the young man said bitterly,



The battling newcomer looked at her for the first time abandoning a perfectly good choking grip

"when I find that my family is blasted and my friend is a traitor! Here I hurry home to be present at the wedding of my only living relative, and discover Margery in tears and you married to another woman. Did you think you wouldn't have to settle with me for having put this disgrace upon her? Take off your coat. I'm going to kill you with my bare hands."

He looked as if perhaps he could do it, too.

"No," countermanded the judge. "No matter what this man has done, you've got to think of the child."

"What child?" The officer paused in his preparations for scientific vengeance.

"This little one here." He turned to the child sound asleep in his swivel chair. Not for nothing had the judge once stood at the top of the list of trial lawyers in his state. He was noted for wringing tears from case-hardened eggs. Pulling out the stops

"No; I can't exterminate you if this baby is dependent upon you for support and for an honorable name which you are giving it belatedly. Vengeance passes from my hands into those of your wife who, to judge from my sister's description, is a harridan well able to take care of it." He started to leave without farewell.

Joe stopped him.

"Who told you my wife was ugly?"

"Margery. Why?"

"Thank the Lord!" Joe grinned. "Then she's jealous. Listen, Sam: Go and bring Margery back here. Tell her I can explain everything."

Sam was doubtful.

"Even the child?" he questioned.

"Even the child."

"Some explainer," Lieutenant Greene murmured admiringly, but he agreed to try.

"How are you going to explain it?" asked the judge, when they were once more in conference.

"First of all, I'm going to try to understand it myself. If you don't mind, I'd like to have Miss—er, my wife in here again and ask her a few questions."

When Phyllis entered, in response to a summons, the judge was more than ever doubtful about the sanity of any young man who would try to escape from marriage with her. He himself had spent fifty years trying to find one that suited him, and he felt regretfully that here she was at last.

She had been rather restless to the optic nerve when she had first stepped into the office, but now, more composed, smiling a little uncertainly, she had all feminine competition crowded into a corner, hanging onto the ropes and yelling, "Foul!"

She had done something to herself besides pin on the fresh smile. To the masculine eye, it was not apparent at once that her tam-o'-shanter hat had changed from black to scarlet and that a red-worsted bouquet was fastened at her waist.

"I turned my hat black-side out before I came," she explained, in response to the questioning glance. "I thought it might look better in case you contradicted dad. Now that I'm

sure of not being a widow for a while, I can be more cheerful."

The judge opened the ball.

"Your husband, Mr. Kelley, persists in his desire to find a means to nullify this marriage."

Phyllis laughed as one had reason to believe she would, musically but whole-heartedly none the less.

"Don't apologize for him, your Honor. There's no accounting for tastes. Lots of people think blondes aren't very bright."

"You don't have to be," the judge murmured unintentionally.

"Thanks, but I am—moderately, anyway. Now, about this nullification—what constitutes legal grounds?"

"Practically the only cause for having a marriage legally set aside is proof that one of the (Continued on page 58)



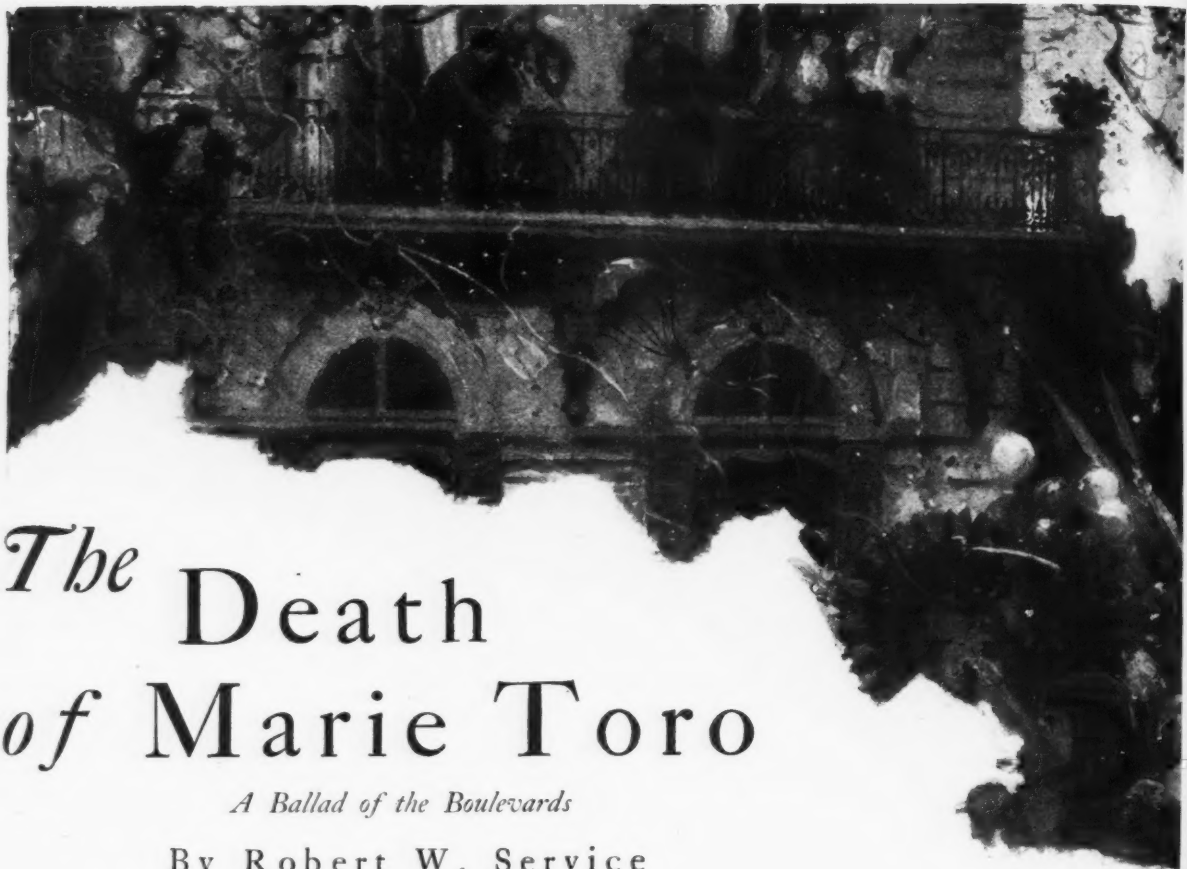
"You!" was all he said. He had sprung to his feet, on his best friend's throat as he did so.

labeled "Vox Humana" and "Tremolo," he continued, "This baby has a sacred right to the care and love of her—perhaps his—father—"

"But, Judge," protested Joe Kelley faintly, "I ain't the kid's father."

"Hush—confound you!" growled the judge aside. "I'm saving your life."

The lieutenant was slowly buttoning up his blouse again, looking down, meanwhile, at the sleeping cherub.



The Death of Marie Toro

A Ballad of the Boulevards

By Robert W. Service

Illustrated by W. D. Stevens

WE'RE taking Marie Toro to her home on Père-Lachaise;
We're taking Marie Toro to her last resting-place.
Behold! Her hearse is hung with wreaths till everything is hid.

Except the blossoms heaping high upon her coffin-lid.
A week ago she trailed along with wild and wan regard—
A woeful sight, the weary butt of all the boulevard!
A week ago she haunted us—we heard her whining cry;
We brushed aside the broken blooms she pestered us to buy.
A week ago she had not where to rest her heedless head;
But now, oh, follow, follow on, for Marie Toro's dead.

Oh, Marie she was once a queen—ah, yes, a queen of queens.
High-throned above the Carnival she held her splendid sway.
For four and twenty crashing hours she knew what glory means.

The cheers of half a million throats, the *délire* of a day.
Yet she was only one of us, a little sewing-girl,
Though far the loveliest and best of all our laughing band.
Then Fortune beckoned. Off she danced amid the giddy whirl,
And we who once might kiss her cheek were proud to kiss her hand.

For swiftly as a star she soared; she had her every wish.
We saw her roped with pearls of price, with princes at her call;
And yet, and yet I think her dreams were of the old Boul' Miche;
And yet I'm sure within her heart she loved us best of all.
For one night in the Purple Pig upon the Rue Saint Jacques,
We laughed and quaffed—a limousine came swishing to the door.

Then Raymond Jolicœur cried out, "It's Queen Marie come back,

In satin clad to make us glad, and witch our hearts once more."
But no; her face was strangely sad, and, at the evening's end,
"Dear lads," she said, "I love you all, and when I'm far away,
Remember, oh, remember little Marie is your friend,
And though the world may lie between, I'm coming back some day."

And so she went, and many a boy who's fought his way to fame
Can look back on the struggle of his garret days and bless

The loyal heart, the tender hand, the Providence that came
To him and all in hour of need, in sickness and distress.
Time passed away. She won their hearts in London, Moscow, Rome;

They worshiped her in Argentine, adored her in Brazil.
We smoked our pipes and wondered when she might be coming home,
And then we heard the luck had turned, that things were going ill.

Her health had failed, her beauty paled, her lovers fled away;
And some one saw her in Peru, a common drab at last.
So years went by, and faces changed; our beards were sadly gray,
And Marie Toro's name became an echo of the past.

You know that old and withered man, that derelict of art,
Who for a paltry franc will make a crayon sketch of you?
In slouching hat and shabby cloak, he looks and is the part—
A sodden old bohemian without a single *sou*.
A boon companion of the days of Rimbaud and Verlaine,
He broods and broods and chews the cud of bitter souvenirs;
Beneath his mop of grizzled hair, his cheeks are gouged with pain,
The saffron sockets of his eyes are hollowed out with tears.
Well, one night, in the D'Harcourt's din; I saw him in his place,
When suddenly the door was swung, a woman halted there—
A woman cowering like a dog, with white and haggard face,
A broken creature, bent of spine, a daughter of despair.
She looked and looked as to her breast she held some withered bloom.

"Too late, too late; they all are dead and gone," I heard her say.

Then once again her weary eyes went round and round the room:
"Not one of all I used to know—" She turned to go away.
But quick I saw the old man start. "Ah, no!" he cried. "Not all!

Oh, Marie Toro, queen of queens, don't you remember Paul?

"Oh, Marie, Marie Toro, in my garret next the sky,
Where many a day and night I've crouched with not a crust to eat,



A picture hangs upon the wall a fortune couldn't buy,
A portrait of a girl whose face is pure and angel-sweet——"
Sadly the woman looked at him. "Ah, yes: it's true," she
said.

"That little maid, I knew her once. It's long ago—she's dead."

He went to her: he laid his hand upon her wasted arm.

"Oh, Marie Toro, come with me, though poor and sick am I.
For old times' sake I cannot bear to see you come to harm.

Ah, there are memories, God knows, that never, never die!"

"Too late!" she sighed. "I've lived my life of splendor and of
shame;

I've been adored by men of power; I've touched the highest
height;

I've squandered gold like heaps of dirt—oh, I have played the
game;

I've had my place within the sun—and now I face the night.

You see, yourself: I'm lost to hope. I live no matter how—

To drink and drink and so forget—that's all I care for now."

And so she went her heedless way, and
all our help was vain.

She trailed along with tattered
shawl and mud-corroded skirt,
She gnawed a crust and slept beneath
the bridges of the Seine—

A garbage thing, a composite of
alcohol and dirt.

The students learned her story, and

the cafés knew her well,

The Pascal and the Panthéon, the Sufflot and Vachette.

She shuffled round the tables with the flowers she tried to sell—
A living mask of misery that no one will forget.

And then, last week, I missed her, and they found her in the street,
One morning early, huddled down, for it was freezing cold;
But when they raised her ragged shawl her face was still and
sweet;

Some bits of broken bloom were clutched within her icy hold.
That's all—Ah, yes! They say that saw: her blue, wide-open eyes
Were beautiful with joy again, with radiant surprise.

A week ago she begged for bread; we've bought for her a stone,
And a peaceful place in Père-Lachaise, where she'll be well alone.
She cost a king his crown, they say—oh, wouldn't she be proud
If she could see the wreaths to-day, the coaches and the crowd?
So follow, follow, follow on with slow and sober tread,
For Marie Toro, queen of queens, and gutter-waif, is dead.

The Empty

*A dramatic picture of
American family life
of to-day*

Illustrated by

James Montgomery Flagg

VIII



Jennie staggered to her feet. Ten thousand dollars! The sum was fabulous!

The people in the story:

JENNIE FOLLETT, a pretty artist's model. She is the eldest daughter of—

JOSIAH FOLLETT, one of life's failures, who has been discharged on account of age from the banking firm of Collingham & Law. His wife, Lizzie, is a courageous, strong-minded woman, thoroughly embittered and disillusioned by the struggle to make both ends meet. His other children are two younger girls, Gladys and Gussie, and a boy—

TEDDY, aged twenty, upon whom new responsibilities suddenly descend. He is also employed at Collingham & Law's, and one day steals twenty dollars, but, remorseful, determines to put it back the next morning. But that evening, seeing his mother in distress over the cutting-off of the gas, he gives her the money to pay what is owed the gas company, saying that it is some he has saved.

BOB COLLINGHAM, only son of the head of the banking firm. He is in love with Jennie and persuades her, against her inclinations, to marry him. He is going to South America, and will not tell his parents until he returns. His mother, knowing of his love but not of the marriage, sends for Jennie to come to see her.

HUBERT WRAY, a painter, for whom Jennie poses, and who is much more her ideal of a lover than Bob.

JENNIE cried herself to sleep that Wednesday night, and, in the morning, cried herself awake. She was in no doubt as to the motive of her tears; she was sorry for having put a gulf between her and the man she loved by marrying one she didn't care for.

Why she didn't care for him was beyond her power of analysis. He was good and kind and tender; he was rocklike and steady and strong. In a forceful way he was almost handsome, and some day he would be rich. But there was the fact that, her heart being given to the one man, her nerves shuddered at the other. The explanation she used to give—that the lividness of the scar on his forehead frightened her—was no longer tenable, since it tended to fade out. The other infirmity, his limp, was also less conspicuous, for though he would never walk as if his foot had not been crushed, he walked as well as many other men. It wasn't these peculiarities; it wasn't any one thing in itself; it was simply that she didn't love him, and never would.

Whereas, she did love another man. She loved his violet eyes, his brown mustache, his flashing teeth, his selfishness, his cruelty. She loved his system of starving her out, his habit of keeping her in anguish. Too much reasonableness was hard for her to assimilate, like too much water to a portulaca.

And Bob had been so reasonable. He had tried to explain himself. He had used words that scared, that shocked her. Polygamous! Monogamous! The very sounds suggested anatomy or impropriety.

Nevertheless, she could have pardoned this language as an eccentricity if, in the dimness of the parson's hall, he hadn't taken her in his arms and kissed her. This possibility was something she forgot when she followed him up the rectory's brownstone steps. For the inadvertence she blamed herself the more, since, throughout the winter, she had never once lost sight of it. Whenever he had proposed to her, the advantages of marrying so much money had been offset by her terror at his "pawing her about." With no high-flown ideas as to virtue, Jennie would have fought like a wildcat for her virginity of mind and body till ready of her own free will to give them up. And here she had sold herself to Bob Collingham, a man whose touch made her shrink.

"I can't live with you!" she had cried, as she tore herself from his embrace.

And poor Bob had been reasonable again.

"Of course not, Jennie, darling—not yet. When I come back—"

She hadn't let him finish. She had dashed through the door and down the steps, so that he had some ado to keep up with her. Even then, if he had only dragged her away and been a cave-man—

But sitting on the edge of her bed in the morning, she saw a ray of hope. There was divorce. Marriage wasn't the irreparable

y Sack

*The greatest of the
masterly novels written*

By
Basil King

able thing which their family traditions assumed it to be. As a tolerably diligent reader of the personal items in the papers, Jennie had more than once read of divorces granted to young couples who had parted at the church door. Naturally, she shrank from the fuss it would involve, but better the fuss than—

Having got up, for the reason that she couldn't stay in bed, she dressed slowly, because none of the family was as yet astir. She would surprise her mother by lighting the gas-range and making the coffee before anyone came down. Thus it happened that she saw the postman crossing the street with a letter in his hand. Though letters were not rare in the family, they were rare enough to make the arrival of one an incident. She went to the door to take it from the postman's hand. Seeing it addressed to Miss Follett and bearing the postmark "Marillo," her knees trembled under her.

Having read what Mrs. Collingham had written, Jennie's first thought was that her early rising enabled her to keep this missive secret. What it could portend was beyond her surmise. It was not unfriendly, but neither was it cordial. It took the guarded tone, she thought, of a woman who meant to see her face to face before being willing to commit herself. As success on meeting people face to face had mostly been Jennie's portion, she was not so much afraid of the test as of what it might bring afterward.

What it might bring afterward was the recognition of her marriage and her translation into a rich family. This would mean the end of her father's and mother's material cares, Teddy's advancement at the bank, and brilliant careers for Gussie and Gladys in New York social life. Jennie could think of at least half a dozen picture-plays in which the sacrifice of some lovely, virtuous girl had done as much as this for her relatives.

So, all that day, sacrifice was much in her mind. Against a vague background of grandeur, it had the same emotional effect as of passion sung to the accompaniment of a great orchestra. To see herself with a limousine at her command, and the family established in a modest villa somewhere near Marillo Park, if not quite within it, enabled her mentally to face another embrace from Bob in the spirit of an early-Christian maiden thinking of the lions awaiting her in the arena. It would be terrible—but it could be met.

The vision of the limousine at her command seemed to have come partly true as a trim chauffeur stepped up to her in the station at Marillo, touching his cap and asking if he spoke to Miss Follett. He touched his cap again when he closed the door on her, and the car tooled away along a road which bore the same relation to the roads with which Jennie was familiar as a glorified spirit to a living man.

The park was not so much a park as it was a country. It had



JAMES HORTON PASE

"If you don't think it enough," Mrs. Collingham said at last, with a shade of coldness in her tone, "I should be willing to make it seven—or ten. Perhaps we had better say ten at once, and end the discussion."

hills, valleys, landscapes, lakes, and what seemed to Jennie immense estates for which there was plenty of room. There were houses as big as hotels and much more beautiful. Trees, flowers, lawns, terraces, fountains, tennis-courts, dogs, horses, and motor-cars were as silver in the building of the Temple of Jerusalem—nothing accounted of. Jennie had seen high life as lived by the motion-picture heroine, but she had not believed that even wealth could buy such a Garden of Eden as this. Expecting to reach Collingham Lodge a few minutes after passing the grille, she had gone on and on, over roads that branched, and then branched, and then branched again, like the veinings of a leaf.

After descending at the white-columned portico, she went up the steps in a state bordering on trance. She knew what to do, much as Elijah, having come by the chariot of fire to another plane of life, must have known what to do when required to get out and go onward. Since a man in livery opened a door of wrought-iron tracery over glass, she had no choice but to pass through.

It is possible that Max, by his supersenses, knew that she belonged to his master, for, springing toward her, he nosed her hand. Thenceforward, during all the forty or fifty minutes of her stay, he kept close to her, either on foot or crouched beside her chair, till a curious thing happened when she regained the car.

As she entered the hall, she heard a cheery voice.

"Oh, so it's you, Miss Follett! So glad you've come. It's really too bad to bring you so far—only, it seemed to me we might be cozier here than if I went up to town."

Adown the golden space which seemed to Jennie much too majestic for anyone's private dwelling, a brisk figure moved, with hand outstretched. A few seconds later, Jennie was looking into eyes such as she didn't suppose existed in human faces. Beauty, dignity, poise, white hair dressed to perfection, and clothes such as Jennie had never seen off the stage—and rarely on it—were all subordinated to a hearty, kindly, womanly greeting before which they sank out of sight. Overpowered as she was by the material costliness of all she saw, the girl was well-nigh crushed by this unaffected affability. Like the Queen of Sheba at the court of Solomon, to be Scriptural again, there was no more spirit left in her.

Mrs. Collingham went on talking as, side by side, they walked slowly up the strip of red carpet into the cool recesses of the house.

"I hope you didn't find the train too stuffy. It's too bad they won't give us a parlor-car on the locals. For the last three or four years we only have a parlor-car on what they call the 'husbands' trains'—one in the morning and one in the afternoon—and, my dear, they make us pay for it as if—"

A toss of the hands proved to Jennie that Mrs. Collingham knew the difference between cheap and dear, which again took her by surprise.

They passed through the terrace drawing-room, which Jennie couldn't notice because she trod on air, and came out to the flagged pavement. Even here, Mrs. Collingham didn't pause, but, leading the way to the end of it, she went round a corner to the northern and more private side of the house, which looked into a little wood.

"Mr. Collingham's at home—just driven down—but I'm not going to have him here. Men are such a nuisance when women talk about intimate things, don't you think? They make such mountains of mole-hills. It's just as when you have a cry. They think your heart must be breaking, and never seem to understand that it gives you some relief."

Jennie was still more astounded. That the mistress of Collingham Lodge, a great figure in Marillo Park, and therefore high up in the peerage of the United States, could have the same feelings as herself seemed the touch of nature that makes the whole world kin to a degree she had put beyond the limits of the human heart.

They came to a construction like a giant bird-cage—a room out of doors, yet sheltered from noisome insects like their own screened piazza, furnished with an outdoor-indoor luxury.

"We don't have many mosquitoes at Marillo," Mrs. Collingham explained, as she led the way in, "but in spring they can be troublesome. So we'll have our tea here. Gossip will bring it presently. Where will you sit? I think you'll like that chair. There! What about a cushion? Oh, I'm sure you don't need it at your age, but, still one likes to be comfortable. No, Max; stay out. Well, if you must come in, come in. He seems to like you," she chatted on. "He's Bob's dog, and I suppose he takes to Bob's friends."

Rendered speechless by this frank reference to the man who was the bond between them, there was fortunately no immediate need for Jennie to speak, since Gossip appeared in the doorway pushing the tea-equipage. It was a little table on wheels, and on it Jennie noticed, in a general way, every magnificent detail—the silver tray, the silver kettle, the silver teapot, the silver tongs, the silver spoons. "And all of them solid," she said to herself awesomely. She regretted that she wouldn't be at liberty to recount these marvels at home. At home, they thought her merely at the studio, while she had been borne away through the air as by a witch on a broomstick.

Jennie would have said that Mrs. Collingham had hardly looked at her, but then, she reflected, every woman knew how little *looking* you had to do to grasp the details of another woman's personality. You took them all in at a glance, as if you brought seven or eight senses into play. Each time her hostess, now settled behind the tea-table, lifted her fine eyes, Jennie was sure they "got" her, like a camera.

"You pose, don't you?" The words came out in a casual, friendly tone as she busied herself with the spirit-lamp. "That must be so interesting. I often wonder, when I'm in the big

galleries, what the immortal women would have said had they known how their features would go down through the ages. Take Dorotea Nachtigal, for instance, the original of Holbein's 'Meyer Madonna,' in Darmstadt—the most wonderful of all the Madonnas, I always say—and how queer I suppose she would have felt if she'd known that we should be adoring her when she's no more than a handful of dust. Or the model who posed for the Madonna di San Sisto. Or the young things who sat to Greuze. Did you ever think of them?"

Jennie saw how Bob could have come by words like "polygamous" and "monogamous." People at Marillo Park spoke a language of their own—"English with frills on it," was the way she put it to herself. From the intonation, she was able to frame her answer in the negative, while, once more, the superb eyes, which were oddly like Bob's little steely ones, were lifted on her with a smile.

"You know, I should think people would be crazy to paint you. How do you like your tea? Sugar? Cream? One lump? Two lumps?" Having flung out answers at random, Jennie leaned forward to take her cup, while the kindly voice ran on: "Just as you sit there you're a picture. Funny I should have given you a tan-colored cushion, because it tones in exactly."

Jennie explained that the various shades of brown and some of the deeper ones of red were among her favorites.

"Because they go so well with your hair," her hostess said comprehendingly, and studying her now more frankly. "My dear, you've got the most lovely hair! It isn't auburn; it isn't coppery; it isn't red. It's—what is it? Oh, I see! It's amber—it's the extraordinary shade Romney gets into some of his portraits of Lady Hamilton. You see it in the one in the Frick gallery, if I remember rightly. You must look the next time you're there."

Jennie tried to stammer that she would, only that her syllables ran into each other and became incoherent.

"But Romney couldn't paint *you*," Mrs. Collingham declared enthusiastically, putting her cup to her lips. "He's too Georgian. You're the twentieth century. You're the perfect spirit of the age—restless, rebellious, wistful, and delicate all at once. Girls nowadays remind me of exquisite, fragile things, like the spire of the Sainte Chapelle, only built of steel. You've got the steel look—all slender and unbendable. It's curious that—the way women look like the ages in which they're born. You've only to go through a portrait collection to see that it's so. Take the Stuart women, for instance—the Vandyck and Lely women—great saucer-eyed things, with sensual lips and breasts. And then the Holbein women, so terribly got up in their stiff Sunday clothes, which they must have hurried to put into their cedar chests the minute they got home from mass. But they belong to their time, don't you think?"

Jennie could only say she did think, vowing in her heart that the next day would see her going round the Metropolitan Museum with a catalogue.

"But you! Hubert Wray says he's done a wonderful study of you, and I'm crazy to see it. The only thing I don't like from his description is that he's got you in a Greek dress and attitude, and I think, now that I've seen you, that the day after to-morrow is your style. What do you say yourself?"

"I don't know about the day after to-morrow; I'm so busy with to-day."

Mrs. Collingham took this with a pleasant little laugh.

"You clever thing! You won't give yourself away." She mused a few seconds, a smile on her lips, and then said, with a sudden lifting of the eyes, "What do you think of Bob?"

The girl could only stammer.

"Think of him—in what way?"

"Do you think he looks like me?"

In this rapid, unexpected shifting of the ground, Jennie was like a giddy person trying to keep her head.

"Well, yes—in a way; only—"

Mrs. Collingham laughed again.

"I see that, too. He does. I can't deny it. Often when I look at him, I see myself; only—you'll laugh, I know—only, myself as I'd be reflected in the back of a silver spoon. That's the trouble with Bob—he's so unformed. You must have noticed it. I suppose it's the war; and yet I don't know. He's always been like that—a dear fellow, but no more than half grown. I dare say that by the time he's fifty, he'll be something like a man."

As there seemed to be no absolute need for a response to this, Jennie waited for more. It came, after another little spell of musing.

"He's talked to me so much about you all through the winter. That's why I asked you to come down. Mr. Collingham and I feel so tremendously indebted to you for the way you've acted."



"Edie, I believe so much in that girl that, if she was to play me false— But there—good Lord!— she couldn't. So why talk about it any more?"

Jennie could only repeat feebly,

"The way I've acted?"

"I mean the way you've understood him. Almost any other girl—yes, and girls right here in Marillo Park—would have taken him at his word." Jennie's lips were parted, but unable to frame a question. Mrs. Collingham eyed the spirit-lamp. "All the same, that doesn't excuse him. Even a fellow who isn't half grown should have more sense than to make love to every girl he spends an hour with. One of these days, some girl will catch him, and then he'll be sorry. That's why we've been so thankful for the kind of influence you've had over him, and why my husband and I thought we'd like to do something—well, something a little audacious."

Jennie was twisting her fingers and untwisting them, but luckily her hostess, by keeping her eyes on the spirit-lamp, didn't notice this sign of nervousness. Once more she spoke, with a musing half-smile.

"We—we see a good deal of some one else who keeps talking about you; and—you won't mind, will you?—of course we've drawn our conclusions. We couldn't help that—could we?—when they were staring us in the face."

"Do you mean Mr. Wray?" Jennie asked, with the pointblank helplessness of one who doesn't know how to hedge.

"Oh, I didn't use the name—now, did I? And, as I've said, what we've seen we've seen, and we couldn't help it. But, of course, if it hadn't been for Bob, we shouldn't have seen so quickly."

"But he doesn't know?" Jennie cried, more as query than as affirmation.

"No; I suppose he doesn't. I only mean that, as you refused Bob so many times—he told me that—we naturally thought there must be some one else, and when everything pointed that way—and Hubert talked of you so much—" She kept this line of reasoning suspended while once more she shifted her ground suddenly. "I wonder if you've ever realized how hard it is to show your gratitude toward people to whom you truly and deeply feel grateful."

Jennie mumbled something to the effect that she had never been in that situation.

"Well, it is a situation. People are so queer and proud and difficult. I suppose it's we older people who run up oftenest against that; but if Mr. Collingham and I could only do for people the things we *might* do, and which they won't let us do—"

Once more the idea was suspended to give Jennie time to take in the fact that a good thing was coming her way; but all she could manage was to stare with frightened, fascinated eyes and no power of thought.

"Do you know, my dear," the artless voice ran on, "now that I'm face to face with you, I'm really afraid. I told my husband that, if he'd leave us alone together, I shouldn't be—and, after all, I am." She leaned forward confidentially. "How frank would you let me be? How much would you be willing for me to say?" But before the girl could invent a reply, the voice kept up its even, caressing measure. "I know how things are with

you—at least. I think I do. I've been young, my dear. I know what it is to be in love. You're coloring, but you needn't do it—not with me. You're very much in love, aren't you?"

Jennie bowed her head to hide her tears. She hadn't meant to admit how much in love she was, but this sympathy unnerved her.

"You do love Hubert, don't you?"

"Yes; but—"

"And that's why you told Bob you couldn't marry him?"

"That's one of the reasons; but—"

"One of the reasons will do, my dear. You don't know how much I feel with you and for you. I could tell you a little story about myself when I was your age—but, then, old love-tales are like dried flowers; they've lost their scent and color. Mr. Collingham and I are very fond of Hubert, and, of course, he doesn't make enough to marry on as things are now. He has a little something. I suppose, and, with the work he's doing, the future is secure. You'll find, one day, that he'll be painting you as Andrea del Sarto painted Lucrezia, and Rembrandt Saskia—their wives, you know—"

"Oh, but, Mrs. Collingham—"

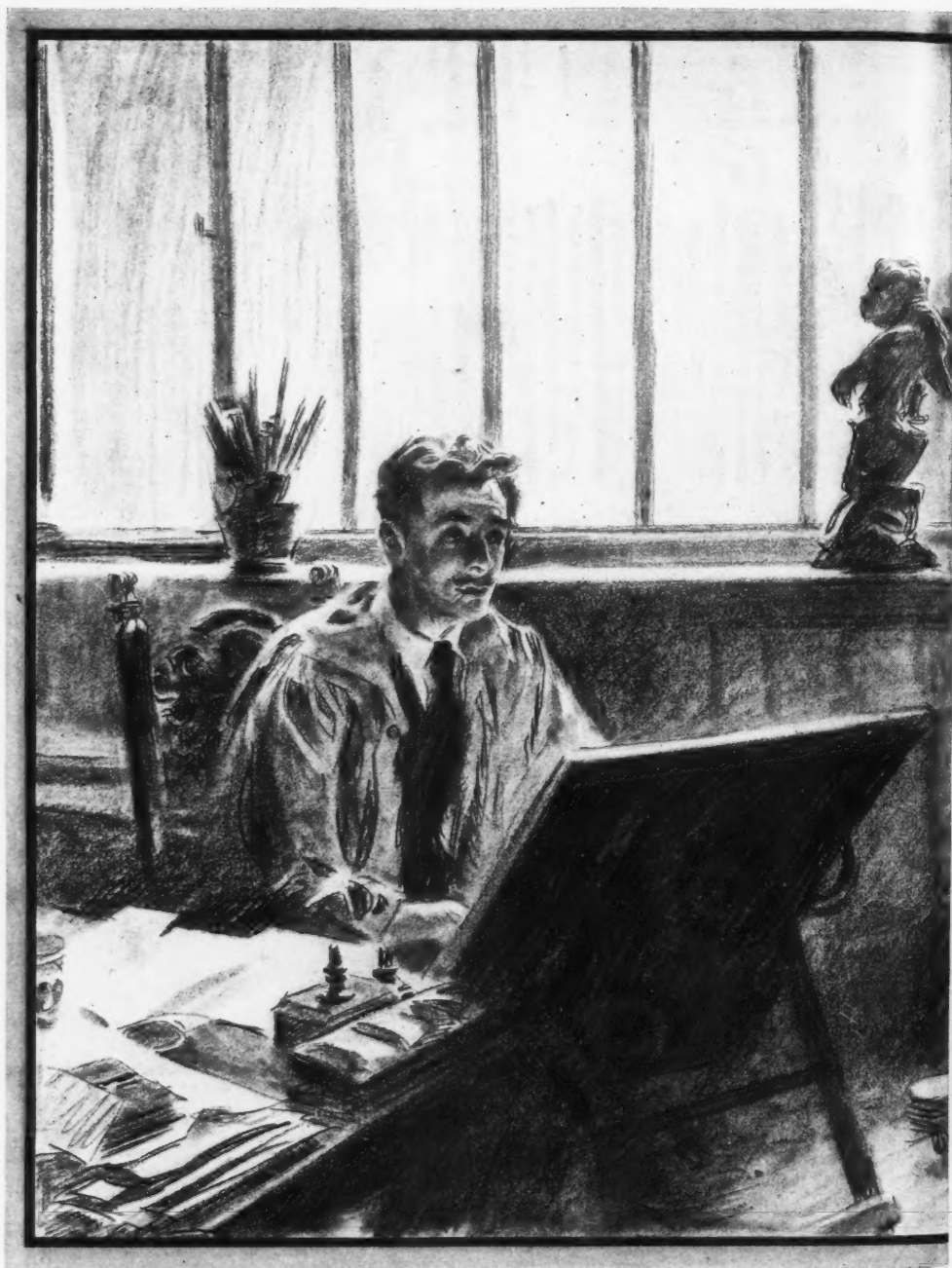
"There, there, my dear! I'm not going to say anything more about that. I know Hubert and what he wants, and so my husband and I thought that if we could show our gratitude to you and make things easier for him—"

"Oh, but you couldn't!"

"We couldn't unless you helped us. That goes without saying, of course. But we hoped you would. You see, when people have so much—not that we're so tremendously rich, but when they have enough—and when they know, as we do, what struggle is—and there's been anyone whom they admire as we admire you, after all you've done for Bob—we thought that if we could give you a little present—a wedding present it would be—only just a little in anticipation—we thought five thousand dollars—"

She ceased suddenly, because Jennie appeared as one transfixed. She sat erect; but the life seemed to have gone out of her.

Mrs. Collingham was prepared for this; she had discounted it in advance. "She's playing for more," she said to herself. Luckily, she had named her minimum only, and had arranged with her husband for a maximum. The maximum was all the same to her so long as she saved Bob. Having given Jennie credit for seeing through the game all along—such girls were quick and astute—



She stood very much as a deer stands when surprised in the bracken—head erect, eyes curious.

she had expected that the first figure of the "present" would meet with just this reception.

But Jennie was saying to herself, "Oh, if this kind offer had only come yesterday!" Five thousand dollars was a sum of which she could not see the spending-limitations. It meant all of which the family had need and that she herself had ever coveted. With five thousand dollars she could not only have put her father on his feet but have come before Hubert as an heiress.

"If you don't think it enough," Mrs. Collingham said at last, with a shade of coldness in her tone, "I should be willing to make it seven—or ten. Perhaps we'd better say ten at once, and end the discussion. My husband's willing to make it ten, but I don't think he'd give more. Our son is very dear to us"—the realities seeped through in spite of her attempts at comedy—"and, oh, Miss Follett, if you'll only help us to keep him for ourselves as you've helped us already—"

Jennie staggered to her feet. Her arms hung lax at her sides. Ten thousand dollars! The sum was fabulous! It would have



Till he gave her a sign, she made no movement to go farther. And for a minute he gave her no sign.

meant all cares lifted from the home—and Hubert! She was hardly aware of speaking as she said:

"Oh, Mrs. Collingham, I can't take your money. I wish I could. My God, how I wish I could! But—but—"

"But, for goodness' sake, child, why can't you?"

"Because—oh, because—I'm married to Bob already."

IX

It was one of those occasions when the auditory nerve seems to connect imperfectly with the brain. Mrs. Collingham placed her cup on the table and leaned forward, puzzled, tense.

"What did you say? Sit down. Tell me that again."

Jennie collapsed against the tan cushion of the chair and repeated her confession. Her hostess's brows knitted painfully.

"But I don't understand. When did you marry him?"

The girl explained that it had been on the previous afternoon.

"But—but—you said just now that you were in love with some one else."

hoped for, she tried to use the opening to the best of her ability.

"They—they do something that—that makes the other person want to be free." Trying to explain this further, she ran the risk of citing a case perhaps too close to the point. "For instance, if my husband wanted to be free, he'd do something that would make me willing to divorce him."

"And would you?"

"You see, I'm taking the case of *his* wanting to be free. In that situation, *he's* the one who would do the thing. If I wanted to be free, I suppose—I suppose I should do it."

"So that if I wanted to be free, it would be up to me to do the thing rather than up to Bob?"

A moral issue being here at stake, Junia was obliged, in the expressive American phrase, "to sidestep," though she supposed that the suggestion in the air was of no more than Jennie had done already.

"I'm not giving you advice, my dear; I'm only trying to answer your question. I'm so sorry for you that I'd do anything I could to help to unravel the tangle."

"So I am—only—only, Bob made me."

"Made you what?"

"Made me go and get a license and marry him. He said"—her lips and tongue were so parched that it was hard to form the words—"he said he was going away in a few days to South America, and that he couldn't go unless he knew I was his wife. I begged him to let me off, but he—he wouldn't. Oh, Mrs. Collingham, what am I to do?"

The appeal helped Junia to rally her stricken powers. It enabled her to say inwardly: "I must act through this girl herself. If I estrange her, I may lose my son." A flash of the lioness-wrath with which she trembled might lead to an irretrievably false step. So she made her tone kindly, sympathetic, almost affectionate.

"And Bob—does he know that—that you care for some one else?"

"He never asked me."

"But don't you think you should have told him?"

"That's not so very easy when—"

"But there was some sort of understanding between you and Hubert, wasn't there?"

Jennie's only answer to this was to clasp her hands and say,

"Oh, Mrs. Collingham, how do people get divorces?"

This being more than Junia had

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"Then you think there are ways of unraveling it?"

"Oh, certainly; if you were willing to—"

"To what, Mrs. Collingham. There's almost nothing I wouldn't do—to get us all out—when you've been so kind to me."

Having a conscience of her own, Junia continued to "side-step."

"My dear, I can't tell you what to do. I'm not sure that I know—very well. You see, it's your trouble, and you must get out of it. I'll help you. I will do that— In every way I can I'll make it easy for you. But I couldn't advise—or—or put anything in your way that might be considered as—as temptation."

But conscientious scruples were not in Jennie's line. When eager to reach a point, she went to it straight.

"If Bob came back from South America and found I was living with Hubert, wouldn't he have to divorce me then?"

Junia rose in the agitation of one unused to plain talk, and shocked by it.

"Jennie—your name is Jennie, isn't it?—I must go and speak to Mr. Collingham. You'll stay here—won't you?—till I come back. I may have something then rather important to say."

The girl sat still, looking up adoringly.

"Are you going to tell him?"

"No; I think not. But there's something I want to ask him. I don't think that either you or I had better say anything to anyone. What do you think?"

Jennie shook her head.

"I don't want to. I wish nobody would ever have to know."

"I wish Hubert didn't have to know. Perhaps he won't; and yet— Let us think." She dropped into a chair nearer to Jennie than the one behind the tea-table. "One thing I must ask you: What happened after you and Bob went through that ceremony yesterday afternoon?"

"Nothing happened. He motored back to his friends on Long Island, and I took the ferry and went home. He said he'd see me on Saturday to say good-by."

"Where?"

"Oh, I don't know. In Central Park, I expect. He's asked me to meet him there once or twice already."

"But I wouldn't go anywhere else with him if I were you—not into a house or anything."

"I won't if he doesn't make me."

"I'd be firm about that. You see, if you did—well, I'm sure you understand—it might—it might make it harder for you to find your way out to where you'd be happy again. Are you sure you see what I mean?"

"I've had that out with him. He'd said that nothing would happen till he got back from South America."

Relieved by this simple statement, Junia went on:

"And if I were you, I wouldn't say a word to anybody—not even to your own father and mother. Your mother is living, isn't she? Don't even tell Bob that you've seen me. Don't tell anyone anything. Let it be your secret and mine. I want you to feel that I'm your friend, and anxious to help you out of the muddle in which you've tied up your happiness. At first, when you told me, I thought more of Hubert; but now that we've talked, I'm thinking of you, too, and how much I should like to see you—" A dim smile conveyed the rest of the thought while she rose again. "Now I'll go. Don't be alarmed if I'm a little long. Max will take care of you."

Left to herself, Jennie's emotions came in waves of conflicting calculation. Had she only been in love with Bob, and not with Hubert, all this graciousness would have lapped her round in silk and softness. Nothing would have been denied her from a limousine to pearls. There would have been the villa for the family, with Gussie and Gladys turned into "buds."

But, as an offset to it, there would be the renunciation. Somehow, since cutting herself away from Hubert by the ceremony with Bob, he seemed nearer to her than before. Things she had supposed to be out of the question now presented themselves as more in the line of those that could be done. Within twenty-four hours she had lived much; she had ripened much. Now that she had had this talk with Mrs. Collingham, Hubert became more definitely an alternative. She could choose him and let this wealth and beauty go, or she could choose the wealth and beauty and let him— But, at the thought of turning her back on him, something seemed to choke her.

On the other hand, home conditions were well-nigh imperative. Love and Hubert were all very well, but they were part of the world of romance. The family, with its concrete needs, was actuality. Jennie thought of each one of them in turn, but of Teddy most of all. Among those of her own generation, he was her favorite. If she became openly Mrs. Robert Bradley Col-

lingham, junior, of Marillo Park, Teddy would go far. He might have a place like Mr. Brunt's. Only the other day her father had said of Mr. Brunt, "There's one who don't have any trouble in pickling down his ten a week." To see Teddy pickling down his ten a week, which would be more than five hundred dollars in a year, Jennie was ready to submit to almost anything—even Bob's hands on her person. She might get used to them, and, if she didn't, why, the daily sacrifice would be not without its reward.

She had reached something like this decision when Mrs. Collingham came back. Watching her from the minute when she rounded the corner of the flagged pavement, Jennie noted a rapid change in her expression. At first it was terrible—that of a queen in wrath. As she approached the bird-cage, however, it cleared so quickly that by the time she reached the threshold, it was almost tender.

"That's because she likes me," Jennie said to herself. She was accustomed to being liked, though especially by men. "I think it will cheer her up if I say right off that I've come to stay with her."

To make this announcement she had risen to her feet, with lips already parted; but Mrs. Collingham forestalled her.

"Sit down again, my dear. I want to talk to you some more. I must tell you about Mr. Collingham." She herself sank into the chair near Jennie which she had already occupied. She panted as after a difficult experience. "Oh dear! It's been so trying! You don't know him, do you? Well, he's a good man—kind and just in his way—but, oh, so stern and relentless! If he knew what Bob had done in going through that mad thing with you, he'd turn the boy adrift."

Having repeated herself already, Jennie now closed her lips. She had forgotten Mr. Collingham. "Coming to stay" was meeting a new obstacle.

"It's only fair to you to make you understand what kind of man my husband is. Of course he's a strong man; otherwise he wouldn't have accomplished all he has. My son, my daughter, I myself—we're but puppets on his string. His word has to be law to us. And with Bob the way he is—wanting to marry every girl he meets—and forgetting her next day—his father has no patience. You don't know how hard it is for me, my dear, always to have to stand between them."

As she paused to dab her eyes, Jennie saw the limousine, the villa, with Teddy's chance of pickling down ten a week, fading out like a picture in the movies.

"I wouldn't dare to tell him of the great wrong Bob has done to you. He'd disinherit him on the spot. If Bob were to insist on having this escapade—you wouldn't really call it a marriage, would you?—but if he were to insist on its being made public, why, there'd be an end of his relations with his father. My husband would neither give him a cent nor leave him a cent. I must say that Bob would deserve it; but, Jennie, I'm thinking of you. You'd have forsaken the man you loved, married a man you didn't care for, and got nothing in the world to show for it. That's where you'd have to suffer, and I can see well enough that you're suffering already."

There was every reason now that Jennie's tears should begin to flow. Flow they did while her companion watched.

"And yet, as you'll see, Mr. Collingham is not an unkind man. When I explained to him that we might be more indebted to you than I had thought at first, he said—"

With a look of anticipation, Jennie stopped crying suddenly, though the tears already shed were glistening on her cheek.

The point was now to find phrasology at once clear enough and delicate enough to suggest a course and yet not shock the sensibilities.

"You see, my dear, it is this way: One has to keep one's ideals, hasn't one? That goes without saying. Once we let our ideals go"—she flung her hands outward—"well, what's the use of living? My own life hasn't been as happy as you might think; and if it hadn't been for my ideals—"

Jennie broke in because she couldn't help it.

"Mr. Wray is ideal for a man, don't you think, Mrs. Collingham?"

It was the lead Junia needed.

"He's perfect, Jennie, in his way; and, oh, how I wish you were as free as forty-eight hours ago! You could be, of course, if— But I mustn't advise you, must I? I don't know how to. I'm just as lost as you are. Only, if you could find a way to cast the burden of the whole thing on Bob—"

"Do you mean to make him get the divorce?"

"In that case, we should want to feel that you had something to fall back upon. And so my husband thought that perhaps twenty-five thousand dollars—"

(Continued on page 113)

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In the Cañon de Chelly, Arizona

The Spirit of the Sightseer

The Desert Caravaners
*in the land of the
Cliff-Dwellers*

By

Mary Roberts Rinehart

WE were, literally, marooned in the desert. True, the trading-post had water and also sardines, crackers, canned fruit, and such-like provision against starvation. But we were to live for an indefinite period on such food, and the prospect was discouraging. We had no dishes, no tents, and no bedding. A sort of lethargy of despair settled down on us, but it had a reaction. We began to see the humor of the situation. We even began to think that it would be good for us. We had so long been pampered with beds and food and raiment. We had wanted a change, and we were having it. In the mean while, we had time. We had nothing but time. And up the cliff-face to Walpi went a tiny, twisting, agonizing road. No car could negotiate it. Indeed, the only easy way to



PHOTOGRAPH BY
J. H. BUSHMAN
Mary
Roberts
Rinehart





The road to Walpi, which lies on the very top of the rocks

Walpi is by aeroplane, and so narrow is the mountain ledge on which it lies, some fifteen feet or so in one place, that a self-respecting aeroplane would overhang it in some places, once landed, on either side. Yet the more inaccessible Walpi appeared, the more determined I was to reach it.

At first we viewed that eagle's nest of a town from below. Then a handful started to climb to it, afoot. But I had long ago learned that observation and cunning are better than muscle for surmounting obstacles, and in a shed I had seen a covered two-seated wagon.

Could horses be secured for that wagon? They could. Could the horses pull the wagon up the trail? Well, the road had slipped in one place, but it might be done. Would some of the women care to ride? Would they?

We lunched on cheap sardines, canned cheese, crackers, and tinned fruit (observe this menu, for it will be repeated) and then mounted into our chariot. We were off. And the road had certainly slipped. On the edge of the abyss was still a portion of it, and to this portion we clung desperately, our vehicle scraping along the cliff-wall, and not an inch to spare.

Near the top we overtook one of the foot-climbers leaning against a rock. He hailed us politely, and took off his hat.

"I beg your pardon," he said, "but do you know where I can get a taxi-cab?"

Then, at last, we were on top, and miles on miles of desert and mesa lay below us; the trading-post was a midget; our cars were tiny, almost indistinguishable dots.

68

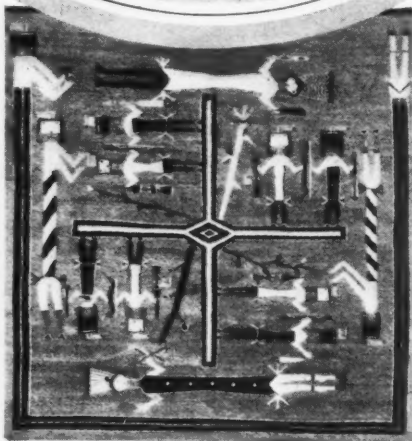


The snake-dance alternates between Oraibi and Walpi, one year at one town, the next at the other. I should like to see it at Walpi, in that magnificent environment. For Walpi is superb. Older probably than the fortress-castles on the Rhine, impregnable and proudly dominating, there is nothing with which to compare it. It should be the Mecca of innumerable desert caravans, but to-day it stands alone, visited by a few artists, a half-dozen tourists each year.

It has, like all Indian towns of the Southwest, its beauties and its ugliness. Its streets are clean and its cliff-faces filthy. And in one of its flat-roofed adobe houses I found a young Indian girl reading a copy of *COSMOPOLITAN*.

I think there is tragedy there. The girl was young, pretty, and neat. She had been to school and spoke good English. About her was going on the primitive life of her people. Yet, from that early period when she had gone away to the government school, she had been taught the order and decorum of living. She had learned of that great world beyond the desert, where lay the modern enchantments, to a girl, of romantic love, of personal and sophisticated adornment, and of luxury.

But she had gone back; for what else is there for her? The tribal system is patriarchal. It holds the family close; it demands her loyalty and her return. And in time she marries and bears children. It is these children, and not the present generation, which will profit by her school training, for she will see to it that they have what she has not had: a chance to adventure and to achieve.



© THE INDIAN CRAFTS SHOP

(Above) How your Indian rugs are made

(Below) Indian sand-painting

A famous motion-picture star made a picture at Walpi. In some way, probably a method not unknown in politics, he secured the cooperation of the Indians, and the results were good. Then he went back to his studio, and there made a miniature Walpi, cliffs and all, which he proceeded to destroy. Thus, Walpi in the picture shakes, totters, and disappears. Then, the picture finished, the star decided, on his way East, to go back there and show the picture to the Indians.

The night came. The audience gathered. They watched the picture with stoical interest until—horror of horrors!—they saw Walpi, their own Walpi, destroyed. Madly they rushed to the windows of the schoolhouse and looked out, and there was Walpi, their own Walpi, safe and whole against the star-filled sky.

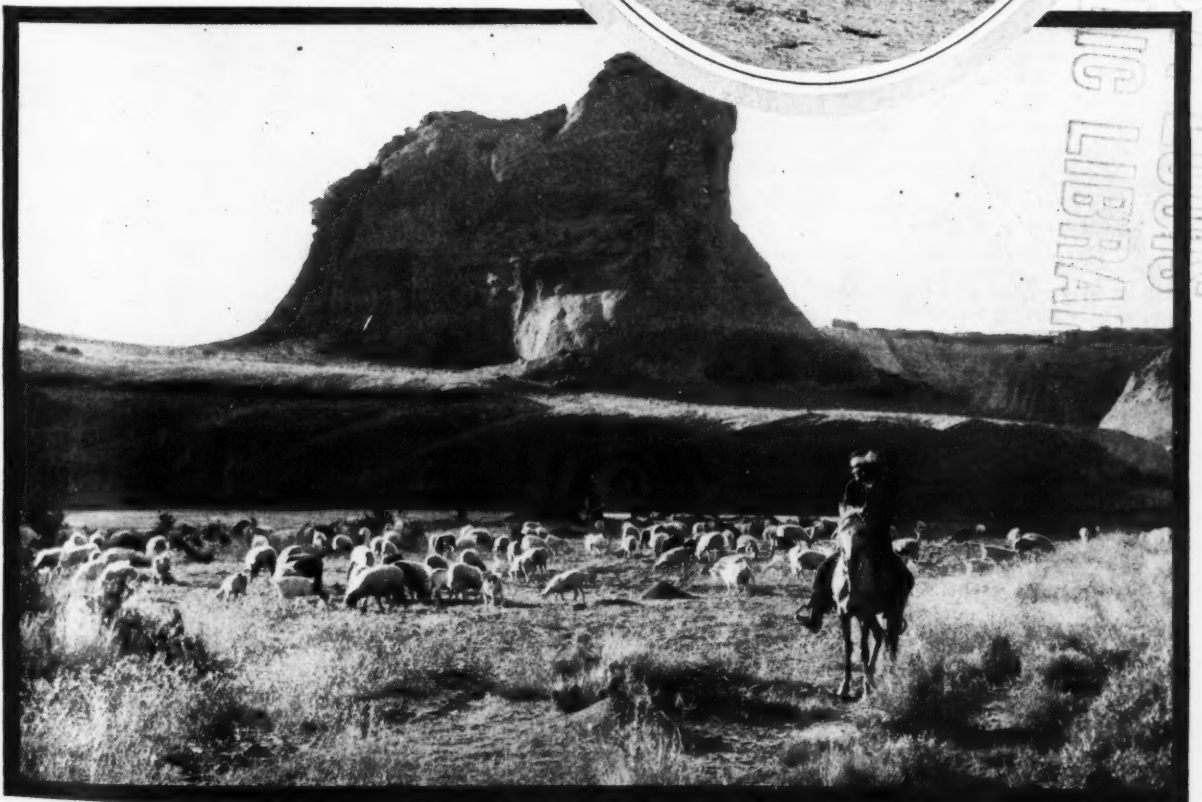
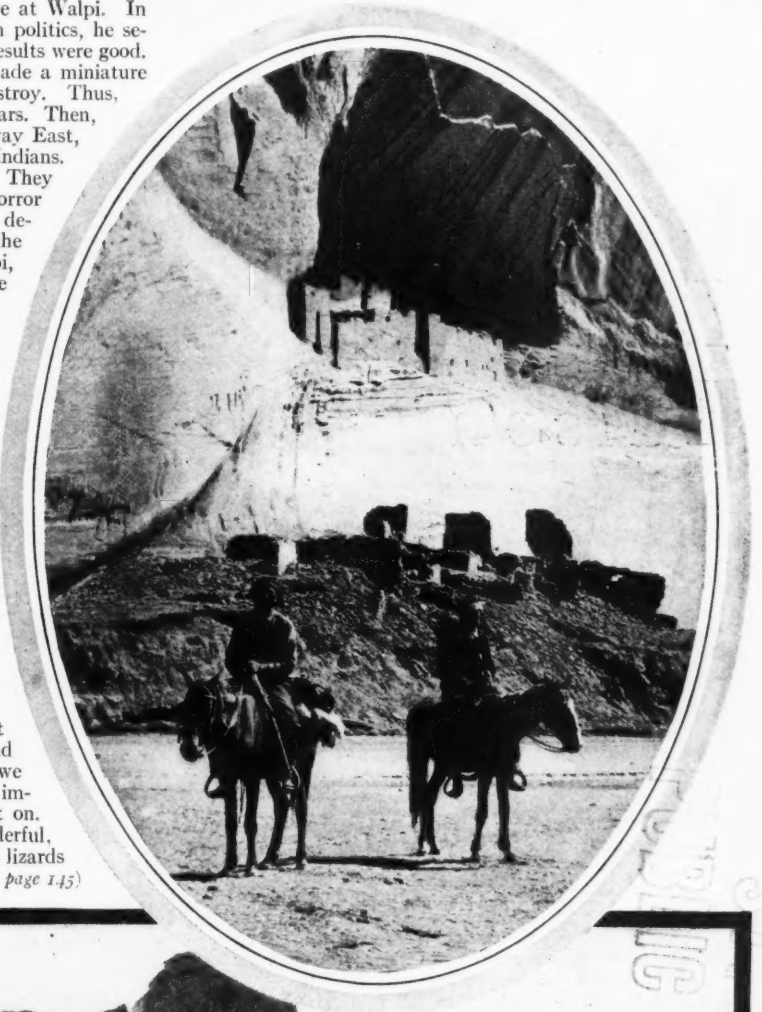
Truly these white men were magicians.

We had, as usual, returned to the car with loot, and now began that fascinating pursuit of the hideous Indian doll which has made at least one bedroom in my house a chamber of horrors, and which was, later, to bring a young woman we will call "Annabelle," that being her name, into contact with the law. For the pursuit of the Indian doll is even worse than that of the blanket. Blankets are made for sale; dolls must be rounded up in their lairs, coaxed from walls, unearched from hiding-places, driven out at the point of a pocket-book, and forced to surrender.

We had bought three dolls at Walpi, and there being no inch of space further available in the car, it became the duty of various members of the family each to nurse one effigy—paint, feathers, and all—as we went on.

For we went on. It was Howard's judgment that, as between one bedless spot in the desert and another, Keams Cañon was better than where we were, and then, too, there was that irresistible impulse of the motorist to be moving. We went on.

Again the pick and shovel. Again the wonderful, beautiful desert, again the washes and buttes and lizards and prairie-dogs. One of our drivers (Continued on page 145)



(Above) The White House, a fine cliff-dwelling in the Cañon de Chelly. (Below) The desert near entrance to the cañon

The Man Who Looked Like Edison

By

Ben Ames
Williams



ERNIE BUDDER was a leading member of a profession not always given its just due—that is to say, he was an expert washer of automobiles. You have seen his like in your own service-station, garbed in rubber boots and rubber apron, a long-handled soapy brush in one hand, and the ragged end of a line of hose without a nozzle in the other. But unless you have attempted on your own account the task he so expeditiously performs, you have never properly appreciated this man. By the time you have run water over your car, only to find that it dries in muddy spots upon the varnished surface; by the time you have wet it again and wiped it hurriedly, and found the result suggestive of the protective coloration of a zebra; by the time you have for a third time applied the hose, and scrubbed with the sponge, and wiped with the chamois, and picked off with your fingernails the lint and dust that still persist in sticking, you will have begun to value at their true worth such men as Ernie Budder.

Ernie could and did wash and polish a car an hour, with monotonous regularity, all day long. For this work he was paid a dollar an hour, which seems munificent until you have tried it, and until you stop to consider that, for the work he has done, you pay his employer three dollars, and until you remember the cost of living and such matters not easy to forget.

He was a fixture at my particular service-station, where his abilities were recognized by the powers that were. If you ran your car in and said confidentially to Forgan, the foreman: "Give her an extra good going-over, will you? I've been out on some muddy roads, and she needs it," then Forgan would nod, and promise reassuringly, "I'll see to it that Ernie does her himself, boss." Upon which, if you knew Ernie and trusted Forgan, you went away completely at your ease.

Ernie was not a young man, in spite of his youthful appellation. I suppose his name had once been Ernest. He was past middle life—how far past it was hard to guess. His hair was snow-white, and his square shoulders were a little stooped, but his hands were vigorous and his eye was mild and clear. There was a diffident affability about him, an amiability like that of a puppy which is afraid of being misunderstood; and, as a result of this quality, it is probable that he was somewhat put upon by the more aggressive characters among whom his lines were laid. My acquaintance with him was a matter of slow growth over a period of years. What might be called our friendship dated from the day when Ernie whispered to me that there had been a small leak in my radiator. I nodded abstractedly.

"Thanks," I told him. "I'll run her in to-morrow and let them patch it up."

He shook his head.

"Don't need to," he told me. "I stuck a drop of solder on her to-day. Gave it a lick of enamel. You'll never notice the place at all."

I stifled my natural suspicion—for I did not know the man—and pulled out a bill; but Ernie smiled and backed away.

"No, no," he said pleasantly. "No; I like to tinker. Don't let Forgan know. That's all."

I was a little dazed, would have insisted. But in the face of his persistent, good-natured refusal, I perceived that I had been mistaken. The man was not a type; he was an individual. And thereafter we became, as I have suggested, friends. If there was a grease-cup missing when he washed the car, I was sure to find it replaced. If my brakes needed adjusting, he found time to attend to them. A surface-cut on a tire that passed under his hands was apt to be filled with cement and composition and firmly closed. I eventually discovered that this habit was no secret to Forgan.

"He thinks we ain't wise," the foreman said to me. "But I've spotted him at it. Long as he does them things on his own time, why should we kick? We don't want to soak our customers. We're human, ain't we? Besides, it makes 'em good-natured. And Ernie likes to think he's putting something over. So I don't let on."

But it was not that Ernie liked to think he was putting something over; it was simply, as the man had told me, that he liked to tinker. I was not alone in his favor. Others also benefited. He was a friend of all the world.

I missed him one day when I drove in and left the car. Forgan laughed at my question.

"Yep," he said. "Gone. Got a vacation. Guy came in here—one of these movie men. Spotted Ernie, and said he wanted him for a picture. Said he looked the part. He'll be back in a month or so. 'Less he gets the bug."

I was interested, and a little amused at the thought of Ernie on the film; and I hoped he would come back at the end of the stipulated month, hoped he would, in fact, escape the bug.

Illustrated by Dean Cornwell



As matters chanced, it was two weeks over the allotted month before I had occasion to take my car to the service-station. I drove in on my way to town in the morning, and Forgan slid back the doors for me, and Ernie's familiar smile, a little more alert than of old, greeted me from the washing-floor.

"Just a wash and polish," I told Forgan, as I rolled past him at the door; and he nodded and said,

"Give her to Ernie."

I maneuvered in the narrow passage and headed in to the washing-floor; but Ernie held up a warning hand, smiling and nodding.

"Cut her," he called. "Over this side."

And as I obeyed, wondering what it was all about, I saw that he cocked a wise eye toward the ceiling. Under his guidance, I brought the car into the position he desired, and then alighted and asked:

"What's the idea, Ernie? Used to be any old place would do."

Ernie chuckled.

"Look a' there," he admonished, and pointed upward.

"There's an arrangement I've fixed up. Just shut up your windows and you'll see."

Mine is a sedan; I obediently closed windows and doors.

"Rigged her myself," Ernie repeated. "Just three-four lengths of pipe and a punch. Works great on a closed car." And he yanked at the long wooden pole which opened the water-valve against the ceiling.

That which Ernie has indicated so pridefully was a rectangle of two-inch pipe, hung in such position that it was just above the roof of the car. When the valve was opened, from this pipe through numberless orifices descended a veritable water-curtain composed of many tiny streams. The water struck upon the top of the car and flowed down over front and rear and sides in sheets.

"Wets her and rinses her all at once," Ernie pointed out to me. "Saves a lot of time, and does a sight better job. I rigged her."

He was, as I have said, immensely proud—proud as a child. The idea was undoubtedly ingenious, and I told him so.

"I got a lot of ideas," he assured me. "I'm figuring on them."

I heard from Ernie, and in fragmentary snatches, the story of his moving-picture experience. "They wanted me," he told me seriously one day, because I looked so much like Tom Edison. Didn't you ever notice that?"

I nodded.

"How'd you like the movies?" I asked.

"Great!" he said. "Say, I want to tell you—"

But I was already overdue at the office, and I made my excuses to the old man. Another time, I said, would do. He agreed, as he always agreed, and I left him at work

upon the car. Forgan, at the door, winked in his direction as I passed, and asked,

"Do you make him?"

"Why?" I inquired. "What do you mean?"

"You watch the old coot," Forgan admonished me. "He's a new man."

I heard from Ernie, and in fragmentary snatches, the story of his moving-picture experience. There was a studio in one of the more remote suburbs, the plant of a fly-by-night company of none too good repute. The director of this company it was who had enticed Ernie away.

"They wanted me," he told me seriously one day, "because I looked so much like Tom Edison. Didn't you ever notice that?"

I did not smile, for Ernie was perfectly sober. But that this washer of automobiles was even remotely like the great inventor seemed to me a ridiculous suggestion. It was true that Ernie

The Man Who Looked Like Edison

had white hair, had a round and placid face; but there was in his countenance none of that strength which is so evident in the other's. I told myself that it was possible the picture-people were wiser than I, that under the lights and with a touch of make-up here and there—

"A war-film, it was," Ernie assured me. "I was the big man in it."

"So?" I prompted.

"Yeah. Inventor. Working on a new torpedo thing. Spies after it, trying to get it from me. They had me working in a shop with barred windows and a steel door and a guard outside. Had a bed there. Slept there. In the picture, you understand. Ate there and everything. People'd come to see me, and I'd show 'em how the thing worked. I was the big man in that picture, I'll tell you."

"That must have been an interesting experience," I suggested.

He nodded, started to speak, but an expression curiously and almost ludicrously secretive crossed his countenance. He held his tongue, turned back to his task in a manner almost curt.

I drove out, and just outside the door—this was in January, and there was snow upon the streets—one of my chains flipped off. Forgan's hail of warning stopped me, and he shut the door and came out to help me adjust the chain.

"I see Ernie telling you about his movie," he said, as we worked. And I was surprised, for the man's tone was perfectly respectful.

"Yes," I replied. "He seems to take it seriously."

"Well, now, you know," Forgan told me, "it's made a big change in Ernie."

"Change?" I blew upon my cold fingers and fumbled at the chains.

"Yes. He never had much git-up to him before. But now he's full of ideas. Rigged that water-curtain to wash the cars. Things like that. Good ideas, too."

My interest was caught.

"A real inventor?"

"You'd be surprised. He took him two of these here electric pads that you sleep on when you got the lumbago, and made a bag of them, just right to fit round the carburetor and the manifold of his old flivver; and he keeps her all warm at night from the light-socket. No heat in his garage. No starter on his car; but he says she starts at the first whirl now."

"That's pretty good," I agreed. "More power to him. I've no heat, either. Use one of these electric things under the hood; but Ernie's notion is better."

"Get him to make you one," Forgan advised. And, the chain adjusted, I stepped in and drove away.

I was able, thus prompted by Forgan, to mark the development in Ernie during the succeeding weeks. He became steadily more alert of eye, and at the same time more confident of his own powers. One day in early spring I drove in and remarked that I had dropped a grease-cup off the forward right-hand spring.

"I'll stick one on," he promised. "One around here somewheres." And added, "You won't be using them things any more in a year or two."

"I suppose you're right. They'll do away with them somehow," I agreed.

"They won't," said Ernie. "But I will."

"You've got a scheme? Automatic lubrication?"

"Better than that," he told me.

"Better?"

"I'll show you one o' these days," he promised. But would say no more.

It was not till early May that I was shown, and, as the thing chanced, it was Forgan who then showed me.

I happened to come in when Ernie was not there. We spoke of him, and Forgan said,

"You know what that old guy's done?" I shook my head. "Company's backing him," said Forgan. "He's got a great thing. You come down-stairs."

We went down to the machine shop under the receiving floor. Forgan unlocked the door, led me into a small room. On a bench was set up a tiny electric motor, harnessed to a wheel and connected with a simple bit of apparatus which had no meaning, at first sight, at all. But Forgan stopped the motor and made all clear to me. The power revolved a wooden spindle, which entered a hole in a steel block, whirling there. I could perceive no purpose in this, but Forgan said:

"It's a test. It don't do anything. Feel of it. Ain't hot, is it?"

I touched the steel, touched the spindle that had been revolving so swiftly.

"No."

"See if you can pull it out." I tried, and failed. "Tight fit, you see," Forgan told me. "But she's been spinning in there for three days now, except when we stop her to measure once in a while. No oil, and no heat, and no wear."

"But what's it all about?" I asked.

"That's an oilless bearing," Forgan explained, a little disgusted with my stupidity. "Piece of hard wood, filled with oil. Use the stuff to make wrist-pins and all, and you'll never have to oil your chassis at all."

The thing broke upon me.

"But does it work?" I asked.

"You see it," he said. "It works here. Well, it'll work anywhere."

"And Ernie figured that out?"

"He sure did."

"Why, the man's a genius!"

"Yeah. Ever since he went and got his picture took."

"How does he make this, anyway—this bearing? Soak the wood in oil?"

Forgan laughed.

"Not as easy as that. He puts her in as hot as the devil, and under a lot of pressure. Don't just know how. He won't tell. He's got a lay-off now to work it out. Figuring on cost. Cost's too much now; but he's going to figure to make it cheaper. He—"

Ernie himself came in just then. I hardly knew him. He had on a new suit of clothes; he was close-shaven, and his hair was trimmed. His bearing was that of a successful and confident man, and he nodded to the respectful Forgan as one nods to a chauffeur.

"How is she?" he asked.

"Cool as a cucumber," Forgan assured him.

"Any wear?"

"I'll see," the foreman said with alacrity, and proceeded to dismantle the test-apparatus and apply a micrometer to the bearing. Ernie nodded to me, and I said,

"Seems like a fine thing."

"It is," he replied, positively and confidently, yet without a trace of arrogance or ugly pride. "Yes; it will do very well."

"No wear at all,"

Forgan reported, and

Ernie nodded assent.

"Keep her going,"

he directed.

While Forgan was setting the apparatus again in position, Ernie and I went up the stairs together. He said, as we came to the main floor,

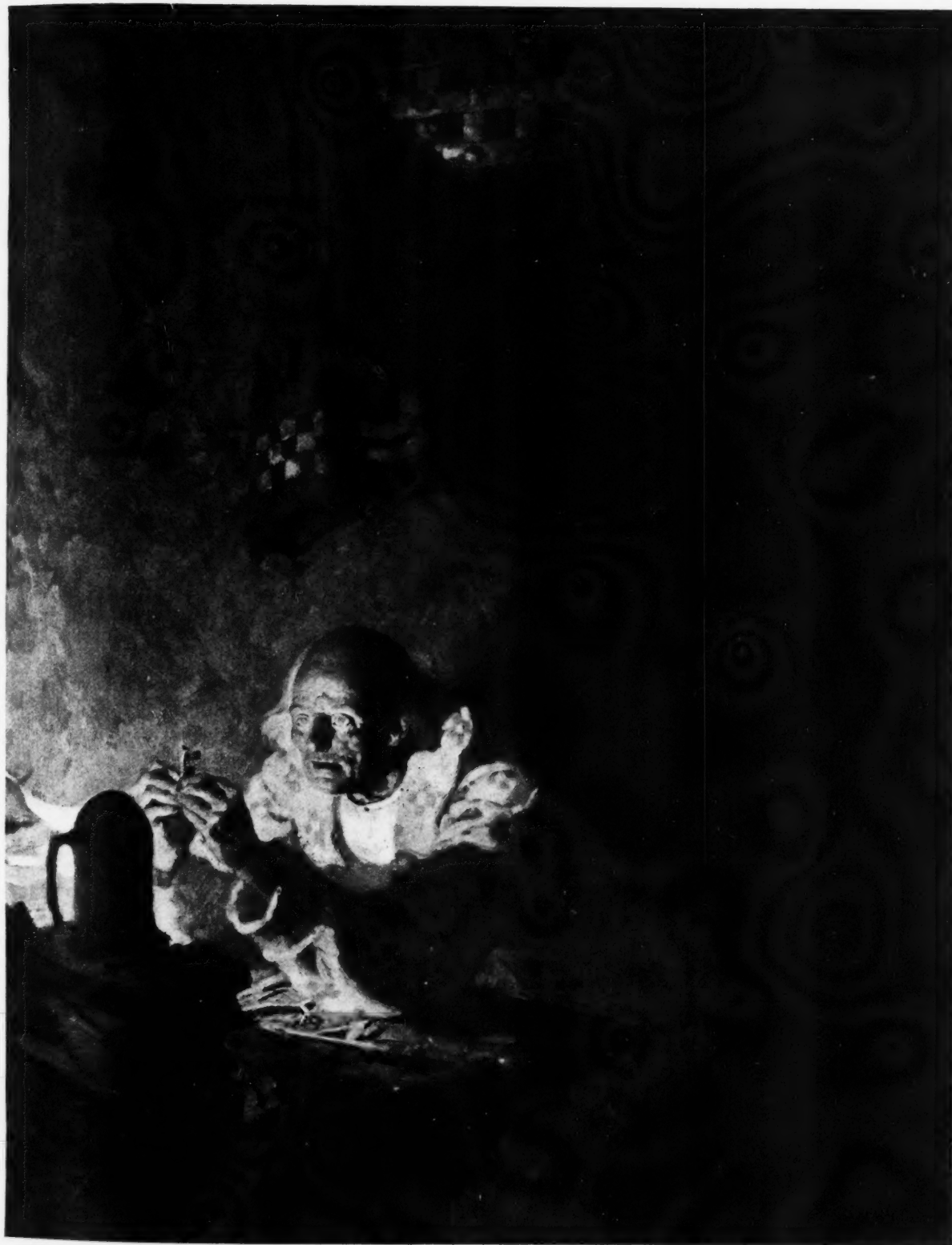
"By the way, that film, you know—"

"The one you were in—"

"Yes. It's at the Globe next week."



The guard at the door was not to keep others out but to keep him in there.



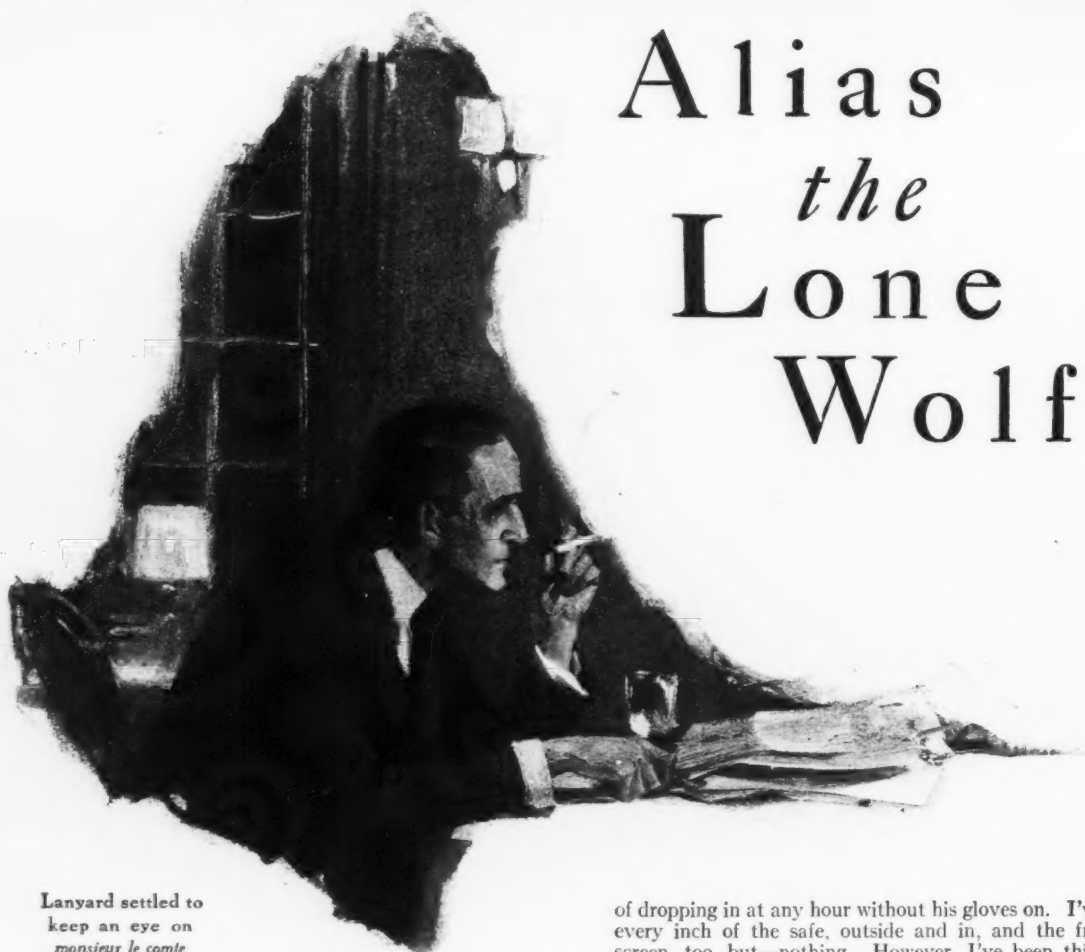
"They had me working in a shop with barred windows and a steel door and a guard outside."

"I'll surely go and see it," I promised him.

We separated with a word, and I drove home, marveling at this new man that had been Ernie Budder—marveling at the power of suggestion. He had been told that he looked like a great inventor, and he had emerged from this experience stimulated, sure of himself, alert, and keen—a new man.

Such a slight fillip from the finger of Destiny to throw open before a man's feet new and lofty ways—

Toward the end of the next week I went to the Globe, and so understood at last that what Destiny had brewed was tragedy. Ernie was in the film; so far he had been right. But in how different a rôle! I could understand how they had tricked him. An actor on the screen knows nothing, or may know nothing of scenes in which he does not himself appear. Ernie had no doubt been told that he was playing the part of a great inventor upon whom the hopes of the nation rested; (Concluded on page 94)



Alias the Lone Wolf

Lanyard settled to
keep an eye on
monsieur le comte.

What has gone before:

THE magnificent collection of jewels belonging to Madame de Montalais are stolen from the family château in the south of France. Eve de Montalais is a young American whose husband has been killed in the war. That the jewels have aroused the cupidity of the underworld is evident from two occurrences that preceded the robbery—first, an attack on the family by their new chauffeur, Albert Dupont, who turns out to be an *apache*; second, the visit of an automobile party which seeks shelter from a storm at the château. These people make themselves known as Whitaker Monk and Phinuit, Americans, and the Comte and Comtesse de Lorgnes.

Dupont's attack is frustrated by the timely appearance of one André Duchemin, whose real name is Michael Lanyard, alias "the Lone Wolf," once a notorious criminal, but now reformed and just discharged from the British secret service. He is on a walking-tour in the Cévennes. He is wounded by Dupont and cared for at the château. He is there when the jewels are stolen, and knows that he will be suspected. He reveals his identity to Eve, for whom he has conceived what he believes to be a hopeless passion. But she expresses perfect confidence in him, and he tells her that he thinks he can recover her jewels.

XI

AU REVOIR

EARLY in the afternoon Eve de Montalais made it possible for Lanyard to examine the safe in her boudoir without exciting comment in the household. He was nearly an hour thus engaged, but brought back to the drawing-room only a face of disappointment.

"Nothing," he reported to Eve. "Evidently a gentleman of rigidly formal habits, your caller of last night, wouldn't dream

of dropping in at any hour without his gloves on. I've been over every inch of the safe, outside and in, and the frame of the screen, too, but—nothing. However, I've been thinking a bit as well, I hope to some purpose."

The woman nodded intently as he drew up his chair and sat down.

"You have made a plan," she stated rather than inquired.

"I won't call it that—not yet. But one or two things seem fairly obvious, therefore must not be left out of consideration. For one: Assuming, for the sake of argument, that Mr. Whitaker Monk and his lot had a hand in this—"

"Ah! You think that?"

"I admit I'm unfair. But first they quarrel with my sense of the normal by being too confoundedly picturesque, too rich and brilliant, too sharp and smart and glib, too—well—theatrical. And then, if their intentions were so blessed pure, what right had they to make so many ambiguous gestures?"

"Leading the talk up to my jewels, you mean?"

"I mean every move they made—all too suspiciously smooth, too well rehearsed in effect. That stop to dine in Nant with the storm coming on when they could easily have made Millau before it broke—what else was that for but to stage a breakdown at your door at a time when it would be reasonable to beg the shelter and hospitality of your roof? Then Madame la Comtesse de Lorgnes—whoever *she* is—must get her feet wet, an excellent excuse for asking to be introduced to your boudoir and spy out the precise location of your safe. And when their car is hauled into the garage, Mr. Phinuit must go to help, which gives him a chance to stroll at leisure through the lower part of the house and note every easy way of breaking in. Mr. Monk casually notes your likeness to the little girl he once met, *he* says, in your father's office—something you tell me you don't recall at all. And that places you as the veritable owner of the Anstruther jewels, and no mistake. Then—Madame de Lorgnes guiding the conversation by secret signals which I intercept—somebody recognizes me as the Lone Wolf, in spite of the work of years and a new-grown beard; and you are obliquely warned that, if your jewels should happen to disappear, it's more than likely the Lone Wolf will prove to be the guilty party. Finally, when your ex-chauffeur—what's his name?"

"The name he gave us was Albert Dupont."

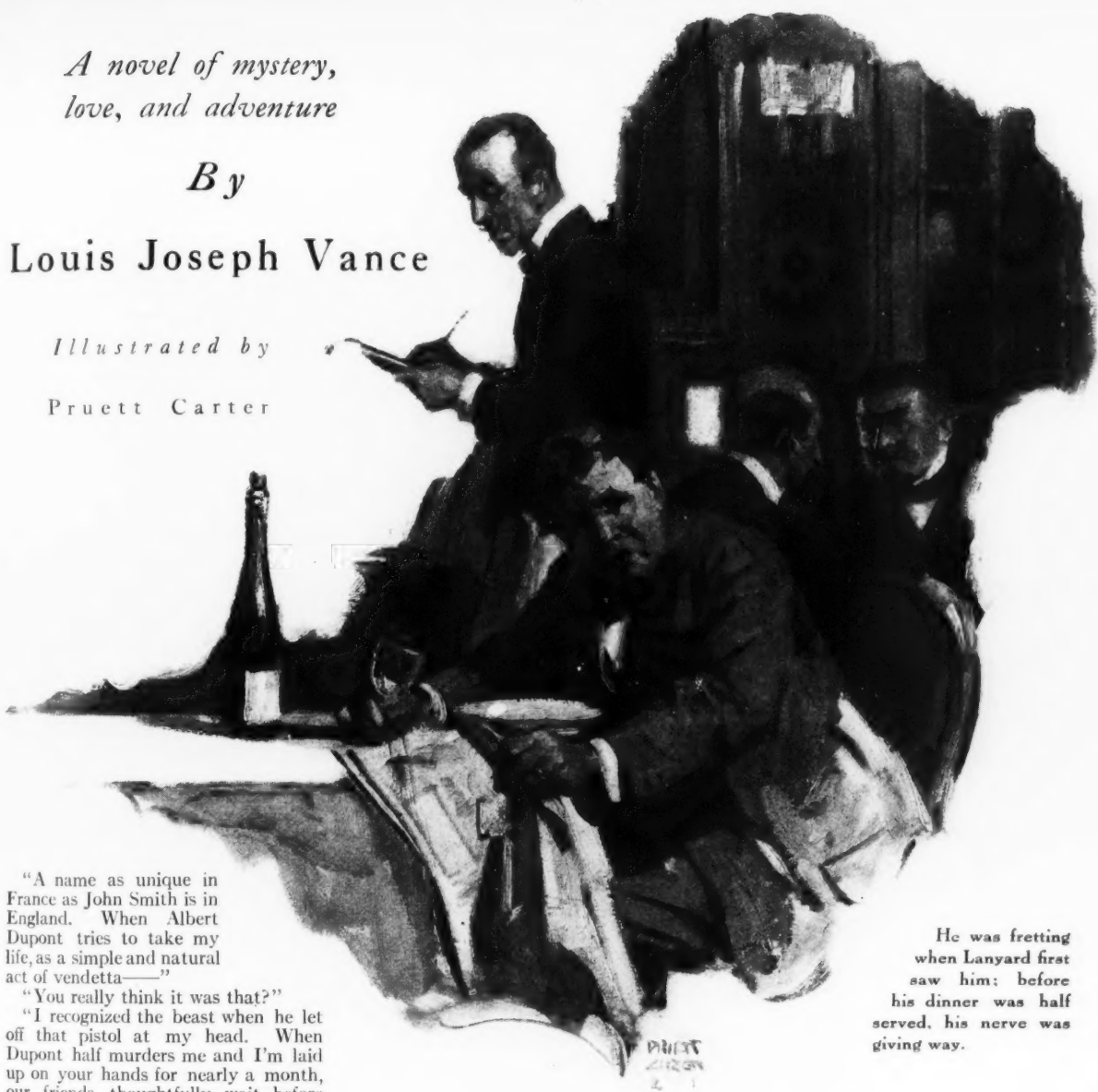
*A novel of mystery,
love, and adventure*

By

Louis Joseph Vance

Illustrated by

Pruett Carter



"A name as unique in France as John Smith is in England. When Albert Dupont tries to take my life, as a simple and natural act of vendetta—"

"You really think it was that?"

"I recognized the beast when he let off that pistol at my head. When Dupont half murders me and I'm laid up on your hands for nearly a month, our friends thoughtfully wait before they strike till I am able to be up and about, consequently in a position to be accused of a crime which no one would put past the Lone Wolf. Oh, I think we can fairly count Mr. Monk and his friends in on this *coup*!"

"I am sure of it," said Eve de Montalais. "But Albert—is he one of them, their employee or confrère?"

"Dupont? I fancy not. I may be wrong, but I believe he is entirely on his own—quite independent of the Monk party."

"But his attack on us at Montpellier, and later on you here?"

"Coincidence, if you ask me. The weight of probability is against any collusion between the two parties."

"Please explain."

"Dupont is an *apache* of Paris. These other people were—if anything but poor misjudged lambs—swell mobsmen, the élite of the criminal world. The two castes never work together because they can't trust each other."

"I see, *monsieur*," said the woman. "Then you think the thief may have been either one of the Monk party—"

"Or several of them acting in concert," Lanyard interrupted.

"Or Albert."

"Not Dupont. Unless I underestimate him gravely, he is incapable of such finesse. He is a thug first, a thief afterward. He would have killed me out of hand when he had me at his mercy, down here, in the dark. Nor would he have been able to open the safe without using an explosive. That, indeed, is why, as I understand him, Dupont attacked your party at Montpellier. If he could have disposed of you there, he would have returned here to work upon the safe and blow it at his leisure."

He was fretting when Lanyard first saw him: before his dinner was half served, his nerve was giving way.

"But why has he made no other attempt?"

"You forget the police have been making the neighborhood fairly warm for him. Besides, he wanted me out of the way before he tried housebreaking. If he had succeeded in murdering me that night, I don't doubt he would have burglarized the château soon after. But he failed; the police were stirred up to renewed activity, and if Monsieur Dupont is not now safely back in Paris, hiding in some warren of Montmartre or Belleville, I am much mistaken in the man—a type I know well."

"Eliminating Albert, then—"

"There remains the Monk party."

"You are satisfied that one or all of its members committed the theft last night?"

"Not less than two, probably; say Phinuit, at a venture, and his alleged brother Jules, the chauffeur, both Americans, intelligent and resourceful. Yes; I believe that."

"And your plan of campaign is based on this conclusion?"

"That's a big name"—Lanyard's smile was diffident—"for a lame idea. I believe our only course is to let them believe they have been successful in every way, and so lull them into carelessness with a false sense of security."

A wrinkle appeared between the woman's eyebrows.

"How do you propose to accomplish that?"

"Very simply. They hoped to shift suspicion onto my shoulders. Well, let them believe they have done so."

The waiting hostility developed in a decided negative:

"Ah, no!"

"But yes," Lanyard insisted. "It's so simple. Nobody here knows as yet that your jewels have been stolen—only you and I. Very well; you will not discover their loss and announce it till to-morrow morning. By that time, André Duchemin will have disappeared mysteriously. Inform the police of the fact and let them draw their own conclusions. Before evening all France will know that André Duchemin is suspected of stealing the Montalais jewels and is a fugitive from justice."

"No, *monsieur*," the woman iterated firmly.

"You will observe," he continued, lightly persuasive, "it is André Duchemin who will be accused, *madame*, not Michael Lanyard, never the Lone Wolf. The heart of man is in truth a dark forest, and vanity the only light to guide us through its mazes. I confess I am jealous of my reputation as a reformed character. But André Duchemin is merely a name, a *nom de guerre*; you may saddle him with all the crimes in the calendar if you like, and welcome. For when I say he will disappear to-night, I mean it quite literally; André Duchemin will nevermore be heard of in this world."

She had a smile quivering on her lips, yet shook her head.

"*Monsieur* forgets I learned to know him under the name of Duchemin."

"Ah, *madame*! Do not make me think too kindly of the poor fellow; for whether we like it or not, he is doomed. And if *madame*, in her charity, means to continue to know me, it must be Michael Lanyard whom she suffers to claim a little portion of her friendship."

Her smile grew wistful, with a tenderness he had the grace not to recognize. Abashed, incredulous, he turned aside his gaze. Then, without warning, he found her hand at rest in his.

"More than a little, *monsieur*, more than a little friendship only!"

He closed her hand in both his own.

"Then be kind to me, *madame*; be still more kind. Give me this chance to find and restore your jewels. It is the only way, this plan of mine. If we adopt it, no one will suffer, only an old alias that is no longer useful. If we do not adopt it, I may not succeed, for the true authors of this crime may prove too wary for me, and the end will be that my best friends will believe the worst of me; even you, *madame*—"

"Enough!" the woman begged, in a stifled voice. "It shall be as you wish—if you will have it so."

She sought to take away her hand; but Lanyard kissed it before he let it go. And immediately she rose with a murmured, half-articulate excuse, and went from the room, leaving him to struggle with himself and that which was in him which was stronger than himself—his hunger for her love.

Those few last hours in the château passed swiftly enough, most of them in making plans for his "escape." Since the next noon would find André Duchemin a criminal published and proscribed, he had need to utilize every shred of cunning in his nature if he were to reach Paris without being arrested and undue loss of time.

To take the railroad at Millau would

be simply to invite pursuit; for that was the likeliest spot for an escaping criminal to strike for—a stopping-place for all trains north- and south-bound. On the other hand, the nearest railway station, Combe-Redonde, was equally out of the question, since to gain it one must pass through Nant, where André Duchemin was known.

There was nothing for it, then, but a twenty-mile walk due west across the Causse Larzac by night to Tournemire, where one could get trains in any one of four directions.

Constraint marked that last dinner with Eve de Montalais. They were alone. Louise was dining by the bedside of Madame de Sévigné, who remained indisposed, a shade more so than yesterday.

Their table-talk was framed in stilted phrases, inconsecutive. They dared not converse naturally, each fearing to say too little or too much. Nor was it much better after dinner in the drawing-room. Consciousness of each other and consciousness of self, as each fought to master the emotions inspired by thoughts of the near parting, drove both into the refuge of a dry, insincere, cool impersonality.

At half-past nine, ending a long silence between them, Lanyard sat forward in his chair, hesitated, and covered his hesitation by lighting a cigarette.

"I must go now," he said, puffing out the match.

He was aware of her almost imperceptible start of surprise.

"So soon?" she breathed.

"The moon rises not long after ten, and I want to get away without being seen, either by the servants or by—anybody who might happen to be passing. You understand?" She nodded. He lingered, frowning at his cigarette. "With permission, I will write—"

"Please."

"When I have anything to report."

She turned her head full face to him, letting him see her fluttering, indulgent smile.

"You must wait for that?"

"Perhaps"—he faltered—"at least, I hope—it won't be long."

"I shall be waiting," she told him simply, "watching every post for word from you. I sha'n't worry—only for you."

He got up slowly from his chair, and stood half choking with unutterable words.

"I know no way to thank you," he managed to say at last.

"For what?"

"For everything—kindness, charity, sympathy—"

"What are those things?"

she demanded, with a nervous little laugh. "Words! Just words that you and I use to hide behind, like timid children." She rose suddenly and offered him her hand.

"But I don't think it's any use, my friend; I'm quite sure that neither of us is deceived. No; say nothing more. The time is not yet, and—we both can wait. Only, now I understand. Go now"—her fingers tightened round his—"but don't stay away any longer than you must; don't be influenced by silly traditions, false and foolish standards when you think of me. Go now"—she freed her hand and turned away—"but, oh, come safely back to me, my dear!"

XII

TRAVELS WITH AN ASSASSIN

UNDER a sky whose misty silver pulsed with waves of



The smaller villain produced a slip of paper and handed it to Dupont, who examined it with disfavor, shaking his head repeatedly to the other's protestations.



"I know no way to thank you," he managed to say at last. "For what?" "For everything—kindness, charity, sympathy——"

violet light and dim glimmerings of gold, Lanyard, gray with the dust and weariness of twenty leagues of heavy walking, trudged into the sleeping streets of the town of Tournemire.

In the railway station—whose *buvette* served him such listless refreshment as one may find at railway lunch-counters and nowhere else the world over—a train was waiting with an apathetic crew and a sprinkling of sleepy passengers, for the most part farm and village folk of the department.

Lanyard made inquiry, found that the train was destined for Le Vigan, and purchased a ticket for that point.

Making himself as comfortable as might be in a depressingly third-rate second-class compartment, he cultivated a doze as the train pulled out. But, driven, as provincial trains habitually are, in a high spirit of devil-may-care, its first stop woke him up with a series of savage, back-breaking jolts, which were translated into jerks when it started on again and fiendishly reiterated at every suspicion of a way station on the course. So that he presently abandoned all hope of sleep and sought solace in tobacco and the shifting views afforded by the windows.

The day was still in its infancy when the halt at Combe-Redonde was made. Aside from the station-agent, not a soul waited upon the platform. But one or two passengers were set down and, as the engine began to snort anew, a man darted from behind the tiny structure that housed ticket-office and waiting-room, galloped heavily across the platform, and, with nothing to spare, threw himself into the compartment immediately behind that wherein Lanyard sat alone.

This maneuver was performed so briskly and unexpectedly that Lanyard caught barely a glimpse of the fellow; but one glimpse was enough to convince him he had been wrong in assuming that Monsieur Albert Dupont had sneaked back to Paris.

But why—assuming one were not misled by chance resemblance—why had Dupont lingered so long in the neighborhood, in hourly peril of arrest? And why this sudden departure in the chill break of dawn—a move so timed and executed that it wore every sign of haste and fear?

To an amateur in sensations, there was much piquancy in the thought that one was traveling in company with a thug who had

already had two tries for one's life and would not hesitate to essay a third, in the same coach, separated only by the thin partition between the compartments, safe only in the thug's unconsciousness of one's proximity. And this without the privilege of denouncing the man to the police; for to do so now would be to enmesh in the toils of the law not only Albert Dupont, would-be assassin, but André Duchemin, charged with stealing the Montalais jewels.

Lanyard would have given something for a peep-hole in the partition, to be able to study the countenance of Dupont unaware that he was under scrutiny. But he had to content himself with keeping vigil at the windows, making sure that Dupont did not drop off at some one of the many way stations.

Monsieur Dupont, however, did not budge a foot out of his compartment before the end of the run; and then Lanyard, purposely delaying, saw Dupont get down from the compartment astern and make for the booking-office at Le Vigan without a glance to right or left—evidencing not the remotest interest in his late company on the train, but rather a complete indifference, an absolute assurance that he had nothing now to fear, and with this a preoccupation of mind so thoroughgoing that Lanyard was able to edge up behind him, and eavesdrop on his consultation with the clerk of the ticket-office.

Dupont desired ardently to proceed to Lyons with the least avoidable delay. Under such conditions, his best available route was via Nîmes, where the next express from Le Vigan made close connection with a north-bound *train rapide*, due to arrive in Lyons late in the afternoon.

There was, however, this drawback—or so the clerk declared after a dubious summing-up of the disreputable Dupont ensemble: whereas one might travel any class as far as Nîmes, the *rapide* for Lyons carried only passengers of the first class.

But, said Dupont, all the world knew that the sacred *rapides* had no sacred accommodations for sacred passengers of the second and third class. Was he not the peer of any sacred first-class pig that ever traveled by train in France? If not, he proved the contrary to his own satisfaction by paying for his ticket from an imposing accumulation of French bank-notes.

Then, with half an hour to wait, he lumbered into the *buvette* and gorged, while Lanyard, having secured his own transportation for Lyons by the same route, skulked in the office and kept a close eye on the gourmand.

Observed thus, off his guard, and at tolerably close range, with his face clean of soot, he projected a personality so forbidding that Lanyard marveled at the guilelessness which must have influenced the ladies of Château de Montalais to accept the man at his own valuation and give him a place in their household.

As for the baleful reflections with which Dupont was patently concerned to the exclusion of all considerations of either surveillance or environment, Lanyard found himself so inquisitive that he had never a thought but to follow and study the fellow till he surprised his secret, if possible. Moreover, nothing could have suited his own purpose better than to proceed to Paris by way of Lyons.

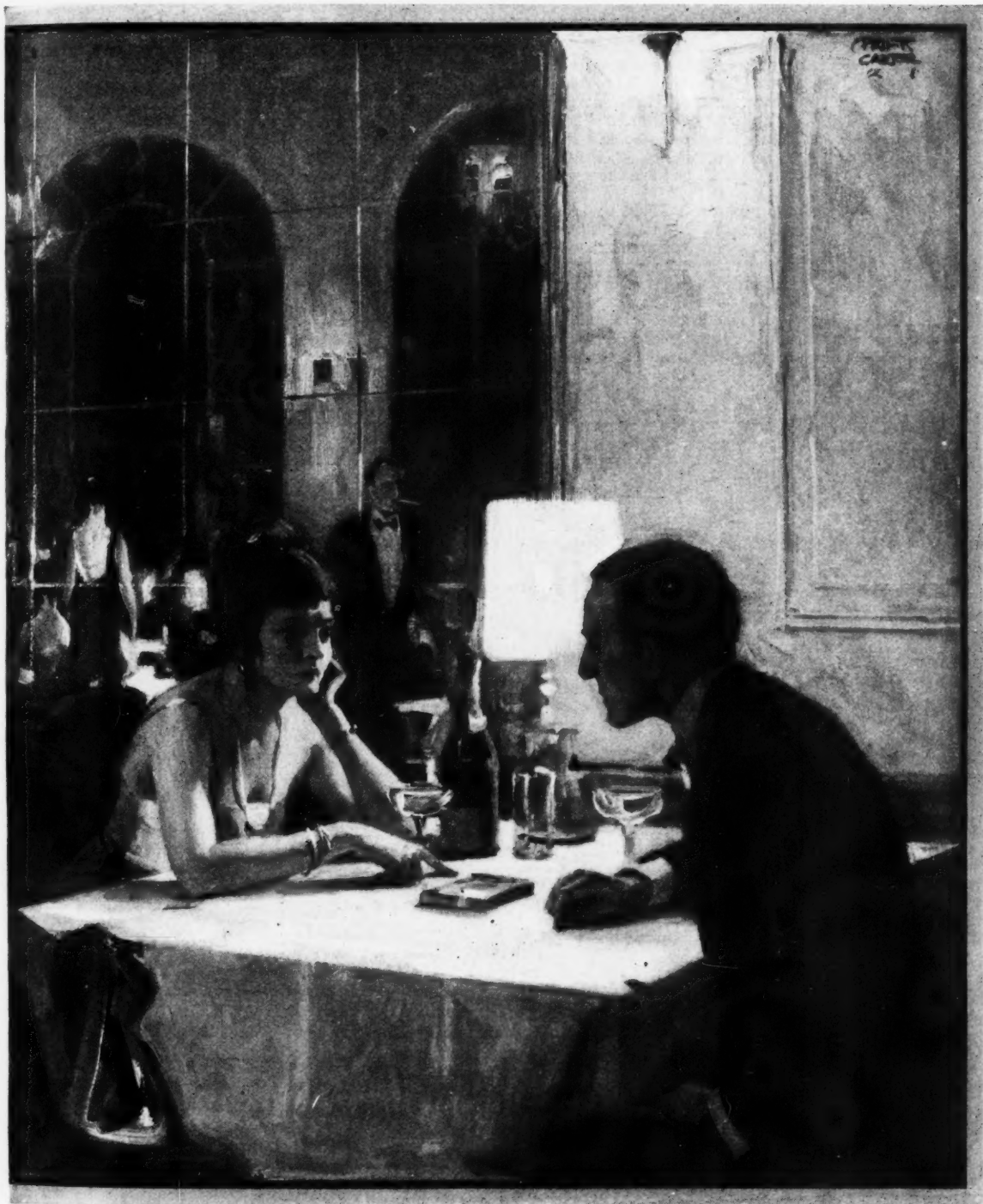
Nothing hindered the carrying-out of his design. Still lost in thought and inattentive, Dupont entrained for Nîmes, and at



"No, mademoiselle. But I recognized the animal as Albert Dupont." in this sad affair." The woman brooded heavily for a But the waltz was at an end; Athenais

that station changed to the *rapide* for Lyons, where duly, at four o'clock—with Lanyard still a discreet shadow—he alighted in the Gare de Perrache.

Here again fortune favored the voluntary sleuth. The station was well thronged, a circumstance which enabled him to keep inconspicuously close to his victim. Furthermore, Dupont was obviously looking for somebody, and so distracted. Presently a shabby, furtive little rat of a man nudged his elbow, and Dupont followed him to a corner, where they confabulated in undertones for many minutes; while Lanyard loitered just outside their normal range of vision. The little man did most of the talking, Dupont seeming content with a listening rôle, and gratified by what he heard. He nodded frequently, and



"But—name of a sacred name!—what had that one to do with de Lorgnes?" "If you will tell me that, there will be no more mystery moment. He caught the sidelong glimmer of her eye upon him, dark with an unuttered question. and Le Brun were threading their way through the intervening tables toward them.

once or twice a grim smile enhanced the ugliness of his mouth.

Not to be able to hear a word was exasperating to a degree.

The smaller villain produced a slip of paper and handed it to Dupont, who examined it with disfavor, shaking his head repeatedly to the other's protestations. Of a sudden, he ended the argument by thrusting the object back into the hands of the jackal, growled a few words of imperative instruction, jerked his thumb toward the ticket-office, and turned and strode from the terminus.

Alone, the little man rolled appealing eyes heavenward. Then he shrugged in resignation, and trotted over to the *guichet*. Lanyard, now with no fear of being recognized, ranged alongside and listened openly.

It seemed that, booked for Paris on the *rapide* to leave at one-twelve in the morning, this lesser rascal had been assigned a certain sleeping-car berth. Business of displaying the ticket—identified by Lanyard as the object over which the conference had split. Now, however, it appeared that a friend was to journey to Paris by the same train, but in another sleeping-car. It was greatly desired by both that they be separated no farther than necessity might dictate, that this reservation might be exchanged for another in the same carriage with the friend.

An amicable settlement arrived at, the exchange of reservation was accomplished, the small scoundrel, with ten thousand thanks, departed grinning.

Lanyard secured the rejected berth and went about his

business, profoundly mystified but not downhearted. Beyond shadow of fair doubt, Dupont was up to some new devilment, but Lanyard would be surprised if its nature failed to develop on the train, or latest on its arrival in Paris the next morning. For the present, he was weary of the sight of the fat *apache*, glad to believe he had seen the last of him for some hours; he had much to do on his own part, nothing less, in fact, than utterly and without delay to obliterate from human ken the personality of André Duchemin.

This affair involved several purchases; for he was traveling light indeed, having left even his *Rucksack* at the Château de Montalais. Nevertheless, it was no later than seven in the evening when he left a room which he had engaged in a hotel.

The pointed beard of Monsieur Duchemin was no more; and a little stain, artfully applied, had toned the newly exposed flesh to match the tan of the rest. The rough tweed walking suit had been replaced by a modest and commonplace blue serge, the cap and heavy brown boots by a straw boater and plain black shoes, the loose-throated flannel shirt by one of plain linen with stiff cuffs and a fold-collar and neat foulard tie.

But this was by no means all. The papers of André Duchemin were crisp black ashes in the fireplace of the room which Lanyard had just quitted—all but the letter of credit; and this last was enclosed in an envelope, to be sent to London by registered post with a covering note to request that the unpaid balance be forwarded in French bank-notes to Monsieur Paul Martin, Poste Restante, Paris; Paul Martin being the name which appeared on an entirely new set of papers of identification which Lanyard had thoughtfully secreted in the lining of the tweed suit before leaving London.

If Lanyard wanted better testimony than that supplied by his bedroom mirror to the thoroughness of the transformation in his looks, he had it unsought, and that twice within an hour.

The first time was when, leaving the hotel to seek the post-office and despatch his letter to London, he found himself suddenly face to face with Dupont, who was seated at a café table near the hotel entrance and narrowly scrutinizing all who passed in and out, covering this occupation with affected interest in the gossip of his companion, the little rat man of the Gare de Perrache.

But the beady little eyes of a pig comprehended him in a glance, and rejected him as of positively no interest. So he fared serenely on his way.

Returning, Lanyard was favored with even less attention—an error in judgment which enabled him to remark that Dupont was in an ugly temper, it might be because of a disappointment of some sort, possibly in consequence of the liberal potatoes indicated by the tall stack of little saucers at his elbow. As for the lesser villain, he was already silly with drink.

One would have been glad of a chance to eavesdrop again upon those two; but there was no vacant place within ear-shot of their table. Besides, Lanyard wanted his dinner. So he reentered the hotel and sought its restaurant, where the untiring long arm of Coincidence took him by the hand and led him to a table and chair immediately facing a similar position occupied exclusively by Monsieur le Comte de Lorgnes.

And this one in turn looked Lanyard up and down but, de-

tecting in him not the remotest flavor of reminiscence, returned divided attention to a soup and the door of the restaurant which he was watching just as closely and impatiently as Dupont, outside, was watching the main entrance.

But now, Lanyard told himself, one knew what had dragged Dupont in such hot haste to Lyons. Somehow word had reached him, probably by telegraph, that *monsieur le comte* was waiting there to keep a rendezvous. And if you asked him, Lanyard would confess his firm persuasion that the other party to the rendezvous would prove to be the person (or persons) who had affected the burglary at Château de Montalais.

So he settled to keep an eye on *monsieur le comte*. He was fretting when Lanyard first saw him; before his dinner was half served, his nerve was giving way. Continually his distracted gaze sought the door, only to turn back in disappointment to his plate. Everlastingly he consulted his watch. His appetite failed; he could not even keep a cigarette alive. A heavy sweat bedewed his forehead.

Efforts to fix his mind on an evening newspaper failed miser-

ably. And this was not for lack of interest in the news it published to the citizens of Lyons. For Lanyard had a copy of the same sheet, and knew that Eve had loyally kept her promise; a brief despatch from Millau told of the simultaneous disappearance of one André Duchemin and the jewels of Madame de Montalais, and added that the police were already active in the case.

At length, unable longer to endure the growing tension of anxiety and keep up a pretense of eating, de Lorgnes called for his *addition* and fled the restaurant. Lanyard finished his own meal in haste, and arrived in the lobby of the hotel in time to see de Lorgnes settle his account at the *bureau* and hear him instruct a porter to have his luggage ready for the one-twelve *rapide* for Paris. In the mean time, anybody who might inquire for Monsieur le Comte de Lorgnes should be directed to seek him in the café.

Thither Lanyard dutifully repaired, and wasted the rest of that evening watching Dupont and company watch de Lorgnes, to whom Dupont's barely dissembled interest plainly meant nothing at all, but whose mental anguish grew to be all but unbearable. Nor did the quantities of veeskysoda consumed by the unhappy nobleman help him bear it.

By midnight he was more than half fuddled and wholly in despair. Half an hour later he finished his eighth veeskysoda and wove an unsteady

but most dignified way back to the hotel lobby. Immediately Dupont and his fellow, both markedly the worse for wear, paid and left the café.

Lanyard returned to his room to get a new-bought traveling-bag, and started for the train afoot, a neat brown-paper parcel under one arm. On the way he made occasion to cross the Saône by one of its dozen bridges, and paused in the middle of the span to meditate upon the witchery of the night. When he moved on, the brown-paper parcel was bearing merrily downstream the mortal remains of André Duchemin—that is to say, his discarded clothing.

In the Gare de Perrache Lanyard witnessed an affecting farewell scene between the little man and Dupont. Not much to his surprise, he discovered that the former (Continued on page 95)

WHY NEARLY EVERYBODY WORTH WHILE READS COSMOPOLITAN

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Buster, *the* Catspaw

*A new adventure
of Old Reliable*

By Harris Dickson

Illustrated by Edward L. Chase

ALEC PATTERSON had got married. Such an epochal event in a quiet community comes like hailstones falling upon the surface of a placid pool. Each tiny splash forms a center of widening ripples, which beat against other ripples from other splashes until the pool becomes a cauldron of indistinguishable turmoil. Much in this wise, a tongue-lashed excitement spread among the colored circles of Vicksburg when news of Alec's marriage flashed abroad.

Yet nobody reckoned the influence of one particular splash, the most secret and secluded, when one Professor Bozeman, with his plug hat, and Elder Tabb, with his 'possum smile, dropped into a placid pool at the rear of The Shining Light.

The Shining Light, as all men know, is a restaurant whose tables are discreetly latticed off from the gaze of street-farers. Here Professor Bozeman—side-whiskered and gold-spectacled—sat down to order pork chops for two. Pork chops ostensibly constituted the object of their joint discussion, their veiled and dynastic purpose being to depose President Zack Foster from the government of his daily marriage association.

"Fessor," began the artful Elder Tabb, prying loose his plate from the gummy red oilcloth, "Fessor, ev'y nigger in town is gone crazy 'bout dese weddin' benefits, 'special since Alec Patterson got paid off."

"Percisely as I forestated," nodded the oracular Bozeman, who had brought this scheme to Vicksburg and consistently endorsed it, although raging at his failure to be elected president.

"An' I tell you agin'"—Tabb sliced a chunk of pork—"ef us don't bust him up, dat ole nigger is fixin' to rake in de spondulix."

The vision of Zack Foster raking in spondulix struck them both with an equal abhorrence. They shuddered together, of one mind, and perfected a whispered conspiracy. By crafty coaxing, the burly, obstinate, and pugnacious "Buster" Manny could be molded into a catspaw; while they remained under cover, his huge hands would dislodge Old Reliable from the marriage-insurance business.

"You see, 'Fessor," Tabb nestled closer. "You see, Buster's aimin' to git married, an' 'spects to c'lect his benefit. He ain't got much gumption, an' when folks seek to argue wid him, Buster loves to fight. Us kin make Buster believe dat Zack's cheatin' him, an', furthermo', dat his policy calls for fo' thousan' dollars. Jes' let Buster git his head sot on dem two notions, an' Zack can't live in de same town wid him."

And so, from a noiseless splash upon a placid pool in the rear of The Shining Light went forth the tempest.

To President Zack Foster, every ripple that radiated from the nuptials of Alec and Rena seemed tipped with sunshine and glorified with gladness; for their example had fired a matrimonial frenzy among the single-trotters, and stimulated a craving to join.

Some hours after a high-noon ceremonial at the court house,



"You see, 'Fessor," Tabb nestled closer. "Jes' let Buster git his head sot on dem two notions, and Zack can't live in de same town wid him."

old Zack casually looked in upon his new office, where Willie Jim Cooney was preparing to receive assessments. The previous tenant—a loan-shark and bootlegger—had moved his domicile without risking time to transport his furniture. So Zack inherited a railed-in office, a desk on stilts, three crippled chairs, and a stove with wabbly pipe. Adjoining this to the

Buster, the Catspaw

rear, a room stood vacant, littered with empty bottles and nondescript trash.

Willie Jim hopped round his desk like a perky bird, flirting his feather duster and setting his house in order, while Old Reliable pondered upon the official atmosphere thus created. Hearing the rattle of a dray on the pavement below, his gaze wandered, and he saw a threatening shadow which darkened his threshold. It came from Washington Street, wearing a gunny-sack apron and toting a drayman's whip. Zack required no second look to recognize the formidable shape and the menace of "Buster Joe" Manny. After one swift backward glance, he took one swift forward step and vanished.

Buster Joe came marching up-stairs, treading mighty heavy. Every time he planted a foot upon the groaning steps, Old Reliable gained an additional hunch to withdraw behind the rail near Willie Jim. This rail was a flimsy barrier which couldn't stop Buster Joe any more than potato-ridges could fence out a bull. But the door at Zack's elbow stood ajar, his convenient exit in case of emergency.

The president remained very still, holding his breath, and watching the hall door, which he had prudently closed.

"Sh. Mister Seckyterry," he whispered. "Dar comes somebody. Go to de do' an' 'form him dat I ain't here."

"Maybe he's a member comin' to pay dues."

"Huh! Buster Manny ain't comin' to pay nothin'."

"Is he drunk?" Willie Jim began to get skittish.

"He ain't drunk to my knowin'. Jes' kinder pervoked."

Whether drunk, sober, or jes' kinder provoked, Willie Jim shivered at the thought of braving Buster Joe.

"No," he stammered; "you go. You's de president."

All questions of precedence were settled by an outside kick, which sent the door flying open so violently that its knob punched a hole in the plastering. Buster's massive shoulders blocked the hallway, a cap on the back of his head, and his lower jaw thrust out like a fighting dog. Before him a trembling president and secretary stood, revealed in all their skimpiness and fright. Involuntarily, Willie Jim threw up his feather-duster barricade, and Zack's teeth chattered as he invited,

"Come in, Brer Manny."

"I'm done come."

"You 'zires to see me?"—without advancing to greet his caller.

"'Co'se," the big negro answered. "I never come to see dat sparrer-legged Willie Jim."

Whereupon the secretary faded modestly behind his desk.

"What kin I do to 'commode Brer Manny?"

Even the tactful finesse of Old Reliable couldn't lure Brother Manny into a paraver. Buster struck out, straight from the shoulder.

"Ole nigger, I come to tell you, peaceable, I wants my money when I gits married—an' no back talk."

"Oh! Done picked a gal?"

"I sho' is picked Floretta for nex' Sunday week. Den us c'lects—cash, three thousan' for me, an' one for Floretta. Ef you seeks to pay less'n dat, I c'lects de balance out o' yo' hide."

"But, Brer Manny," Zack argued, "you doesn't c'lect dat much—not accordin' to de constitootion, an' likewise de by-laws."

"I ain't carin' 'bout yo' by-laws—an' my constitootion is powerful stout."

Buster's gingham shirt gaped open at the throat; his sleeves were rolled up, exposing a muscular forearm; his fingers toyed

with the whip-handle, and, for one shivering moment, Old Reliable deplored the thinness of his own pants. But the eyes behind the whip-lash were not even looking at Zack's breeches; they were measuring the distance to a wisp of paper which rested beside the stove. His arm poised in mid-air; his lash snapped, and strewn the floor with tattered scraps of paper.

Hitherto, the shy and retiring secretary had taken no part in the conference. And this whip-lash performance did not en-



"You better hustle an' c'lect, 'cause ef my fo' thousan'

courage Willie Jim to meddle with presidential affairs. Except for those splindling legs beneath the desk, he remained invisible, even when Brother Manny strode out, turning in the doorway for a final word.

"Now, lissen to me ole man—lissen real good: I knows yo' frame-up for Alec Patterson to grab mighty nigh all o' dat fust benefit. 'Tain't but forty-eight dollars lef' in de bank. You better hustle an' c'lect, 'cause ef my fo' thousan' dollars fall jes' two bits short, I'll fix you so yo' godmudder won't know you!"

The whites showed in Old Reliable's eyes as he made certain that his door of escape lay clear; then he protested desperately.

"You got no right to nothin'! 'You's onfinancial."

"Onfinancial?" How come?" And Buster started back.

"You ain't paid yo' 'sessment."

"Ain't paid?" I *is* paid. An' don't you 'spute my word."

"I ain't 'sputtin' yo' word, Brer Manny. But dat fust 'sessment warn't for yo' whole life."

"What's it for?"

While Zack dared not venture too far from the salvation door on his left flank, he did attempt to elucidate.

"Fo' dollars an' forty cents—for you an' Floretta bofe."

The sight of Buster Manny digging up coin was enough to make Old Reliable grin—internally. This raging bull had come to gore him, and behold the bull transformed into a cow, which was now fixing to give milk! Yet the triumphant arguer assumed no lion-tamer's air; instead, he talked on mesmerically, with the soothing tones of a dentist.

"You onderstan', Brer Manny, yo' dues is figgered at one dollar an' ten cents on ev'y thousan'."

"Thousan'!" Buster snatched up the word as a red rag which sent the bull's head and tail into the air and drew snorting fire from his nostrils.

"Ole nigger," he bel-
lowed, "when I *pays* fer a thousan', I wants a *thousan'*!"

"But, Brer Manny, I done 'splained—"

"You ain't 'splained *nothin'* to me."

How could Zack explain when the bull wheeled and went plunging down to the street? Half-way down the stairs, he turned and shouted;

"Ain't got enough to pay dem dues. I'm goin' to fetch it, den come back an' settle wid you."

One moment his ponderous shoulders blotted the street door, then passed and let in a flood of sunshine. At the head of the stairs, old Zack stood muttering to himself,

"Comin' back—c'lect out o' my hide—settle wid me."

Casting one eye behind him, he caught Willie Jim in the recreant act of sneaking toward the rear.

"Hold on!" Zack grabbed his deserting henchman. "You can't leave yo' office dis time o' day."

"I'm 'bleeged to leave."

"No, you don't, Willie Jim! No, you don't!"

"But s'pose Buster Manny 'rives back?"

"Ef he do," Zack counseled stoutly, "jes' c'lect his dues, an' bluff him out o' here."

"Who? Me? Bluff Buster Manny?" Willie Jim developed a pale-green panic round the hills.

"Sholy. Skeer 'im, Willie Jim! Skeer 'im!"

"Scare Buster? Not me, Uncle Zack! You remain an' scare him."

Just in proportion as the clatter of Buster's departing dray had fallen lower and lower, so Zack's cigar rose higher and higher between his teeth until it tilted cockishly upward.

"Willie Jim," he confided, with a hand upon his secretary's arm, "I wouldn't axe no better pastime dan settin' here an' bluffin' Buster. Ef I meets him on de street, I'll cripple dat nigger so he can't climb dese steps. Now I mus' go out to c'lect."

Now, Willie Jim Cooney was not wholly constructed in the fashion of a fool. He saw that old Zack was hesitating between a surreptitious back-door exit and a pageant down the main



dollars fall jes' two bits short. I'll fix you so yo' godmudder won't know you!"

"It's *dis* way Brer Manny: You paid yo' *fust* 'sessment. De *secon'* 'sessment is now fell due."

"De which?"

"Secon' 'sessment, for our nex' weddin'—maybe your'n."

Although a crude and blundering person, Buster Manny prided himself upon being honest.

"Den I got to pay agin?" he asked.

"Co'se. Ev'y member is 'quired to pay when any member gits married."

Edging forward as he argued, old Zack soon had Buster stampeding to the door, driven by an irresistible attack of logic. Then the burly drayman thrust a hand into his pocket.

"How much mo' do it cost?" he queried.

stairway. As Willie Jim observed so narrowly, Zack buttoned his coat, jammed his hat on tight, and, with dignified demeanor, descended the steps. At the street door he squinted forth, like some wary old coon, then emerged for public view.

This was Old Reliable's day of glory. Negroes itched to touch the hand that had paid off; members clamored to congratulate a philanthropist who had founded his benefits upon the unassailable Gibraltar of solvency. It was fitting that Zack should promenade. His sheep hungered, and he fed them like a prodigal, parading the length of Washington Street.

Subconsciously, he could see the gold-spectacled Bozeman and the artful Tabb, with others of a disgruntled minority, putting their heads together and consulting in the alley. But the president gave no heed to petty malice while surrounded by the simple faith of his people—a faith which constantly added to the jingling coins already in his pocket. He could even forget the bellicose Buster when so many trusting souls stopped him to pay their dues—and ten cents on every dollar belonged to Zack. For ten per cent. was his rake-off, and publicity his reward.

This reward expanded and grew more cosmopolitan than he dreamed, for the blessed sunlight of Zack's publicity had begun to shine on foreign shores. From remote Port Gibson, thirty miles away, an ambassador arrived, seeking audience with the great president. They met on the vacant lot just opposite the National Park Hotel.

"Scuse, suh—but ain't dis President Foster?" He was a foxy-faced and black-coated ambassador.

"De same," Zack modestly confessed. "An' what mought be yo' entitlements?"

"I'm de Rev'ren' Monnyduke Brown, from Pote Gibson. Our race at Pote Gibson 'zires you to come down an' start a marriage 'socation."

"Is Pote Gibson a good place for weddin's?"

"Mighty good. Us had a terrible wet fall on de cotton, which is 'lowed our congregations mo' time fer marryin'."

"Is dat so? Is dat so?" mused Old Reliable.

To remove any lingering doubts, the Reverend Brown urged further:

"Pote Gibson is a fine place. I kin prove dat by Brudder Ed Grillo. Here he comes right now."

Nodding a gracious permission for the summons of Brother Grillo, the president stiffened up judicially while waiting for proof. Then he just happened to glimpse what that Port Gibson nigger was doing—stepping into the street to hail Buster Manny. Fortunately, Buster had stopped his dray to talk with another malcontent, and now stood balancing himself on the tail-end, like a colossus of Rhodes. That's when Old Reliable snatched the ambassador's arm,

"Hole on, Rev'ren'! Hole on! He ain't named Grillo."

"Yes, he is! Dat's what Ed go by on de church-roll at Pote Gibson."

"Forgit Pote Gibson an' let him go by on dat dray."

Two active back steps and a reverse curve into the vacant lot anchored Old Reliable in the lee of a parked automobile while Buster Manny passed, larruping his mule and shaking his head as if something pestered him. From the speed and direction, Zack figured that he was making for the office, and only Willie Jim would be there to furnish a hide. Pleased with this thought, the president smiled as he reappeared from behind the auto and suggested:

"Come wid me, Rev'ren' Brown. Les's walk along an' talk private."

As Buster was last seen rushing northward, Old Reliable turned their faces toward the warm and fragrant south.

Late afternoon had stolen upon the little city in a lassitude, a *dolce far niente*. All the earth and the heavens, all the white folks and all the niggers being at peace, Old Reliable never suspected that Luck was fixing to play horse with him. Fortune seemed to offer her choicest gifts. Yet Fortune came holding a ripe peach in her left hand, while behind her back she secreted a rotten egg.

Unsuspecting of the rotten egg, Old Reliable and the Reverend Brown sauntered southward, while runty Sim Hollister shambled round the corner at Veto Street and humbly greeted the serenity of his president. No combination of Zack and fair Fortune could have contrived a more propitious encounter. Through Simmy Hollister, Zack could demonstrate the amiable despotism of his association. The big-eyed Simmy, with bony arms escaping from syncopated coat sleeves, was the heaven-selected creature for an object-lesson. And Luck sent Simmy with the inquiry:

"President! Unc' Zack! Pa say kin me an' Lindy git married dis comin' Sad'd'y night?"

"Co'se you kin." Zack vouchsafed a permit, and the Port Gibson ambassador was profoundly impressed until Simmy blundered,

"An' ma wants to know will I git paid?"

"Git paid? 'Git paid?"

"Yas, suh. Ma say you ain't got but forty-eight dollars lef' in de bank."

For the second time within an hour, Old Reliable found himself confronted by the exact amount of his balance at the Planters' Bank.

"Shet up, nigger! Shet up! I'll c'lect a milyon dollars an' six bits befo' you kin raise three dollars fer a pair o' marriage licenses."

Which would have squelched the scrawny Sim, but he kept on talking with his mouth.

"Ma say you never had no more'n enough money to pay one benefit, an' Alec got dat. An' pa say I better wait fer my weddin' until you c'lect some mo'."

"C'lect some mo'?" Zack already had the blind staggers from gleaning grapes of Ephraim to pay Buster Manny. "You talk like I ain't got no other bizness 'cept to c'lect for you—whilst you's onfinancial—onfinancial."

This complete and dismissing answer flashed from Zack like a bomb, yet left the boy unmoved.

"Dat's so. Pa say I got to pay agin', an' here's de money." Simmy grabbed deep into his breeches pockets, fishing out dimes and nickles and quarters until they totaled the constitutional dues.

To the Afro-artistic temperament, no sight in nature can be so beautiful as that of a producing member in the act of paying up. It suited Zack well for this Port Gibson emissary to have an ocular verification of the process which Reverend Brown drew nigh to observe. Under such agreeable obsession, none had ears for the thump, thump, thump of an approaching mule, nor did they glimpse Buster Manny as he stepped from the tail of his dray to the sidewalk. Immediately behind old Zack the scowling drayman stood for a moment and listened to anxious Simmy.

"Here 'tis, President. Now den! Ef me an' Lindy gits married Sad'd'y night, kin us c'lect?"

"No!" Buster thundered. His lightning fingers gripped Simmy's wrist and scattered silver on the sidewalk. Old Zack crawfished, and the Port Gibson negro effaced himself in a doorway. Simmy dropped to his knees and began picking up the money, while Buster Manny shook his shoulder.

"Lissen to me, Simmy: 'Twon't be nary weddin' in dis 'socation, not befo' I gits married. Mought be some funerals."

"Yas, suh! Yas, suh!"

Turning from the boy, Buster showed Old Reliable a handful of cash.

"Here's fo' dollars an' forty cents. Gimme my receipt."

In a daze, Zack took the money and mumbled,

"Willie Jim Cooney—he gives out de receipts."

"Go an' fetch mine—right now!"

A piston-rod propulsion from Buster's arm sent Zack spinning toward the office; but he recovered himself and protested:

"Wait a minute, Brer Manny! Jes' a minute!"

"Wait? For which?"

"Simmy wants to pay me his 'sessment."

"Simmy don't want to pay nothin'—not ef he aim to git married ahead o' me." Far be it from the cowering Simmy to raise a disputation with Buster Manny, who now confronted the president and demanded,

"How much is you c'lected fer me?"

Frightened though he was, the volcanic indignation erupted from Old Reliable.

"How you 'spect me to c'lect when you bulges along an' busts it up?" Then he lowered his voice, pointed down at the cash-spattered sidewalk, and whispered, "Dar's de money what I 'spect to pay you."

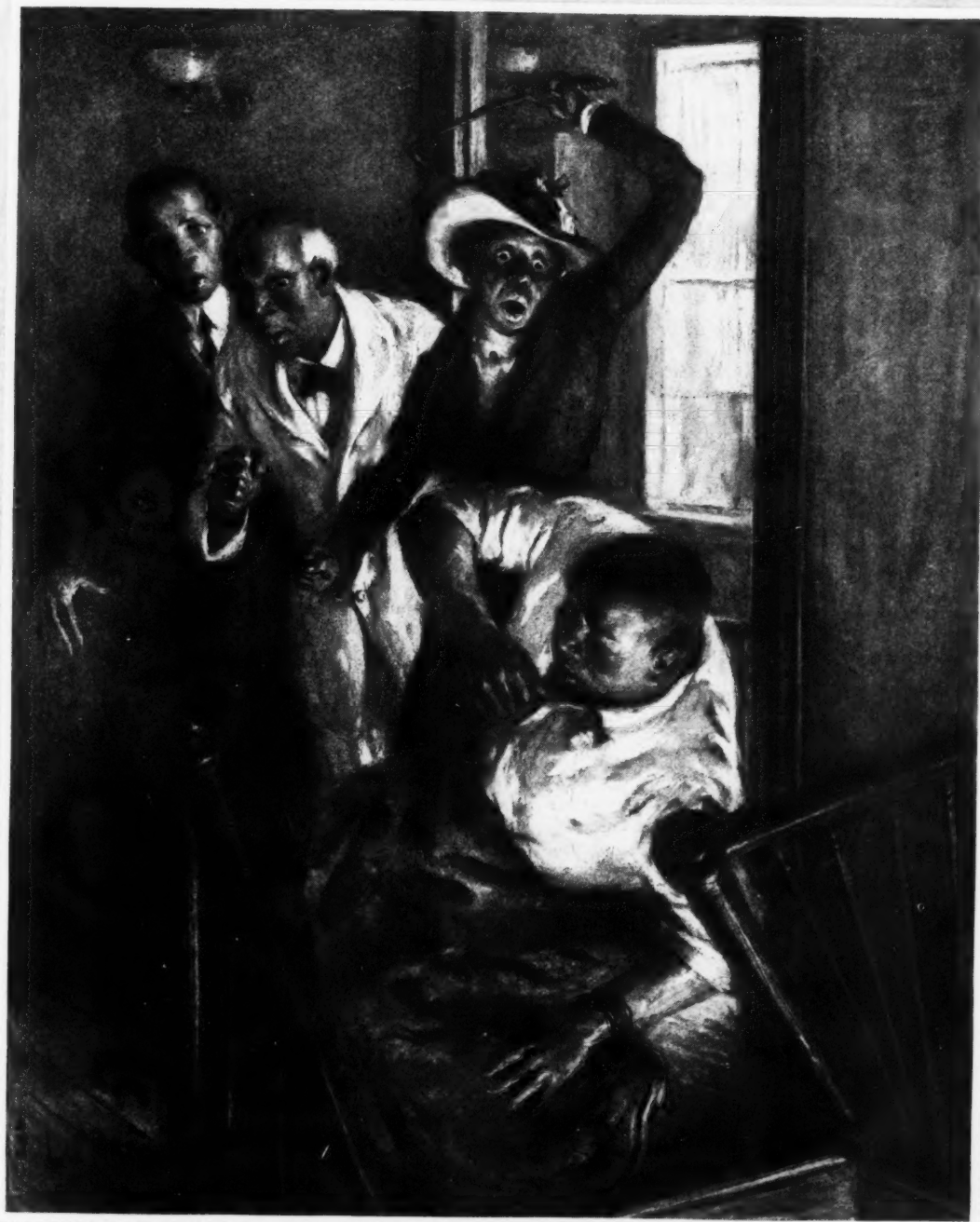
The stupid drayman stared at Simmy Hollister reclaiming the nickles and sinking them in his flank. Slowly the idea percolated through Buster's skull that he was queering his own game and that he must help old Zack collect.

All of a sudden, without the slightest tuning-up, the big-voiced drayman burst into a full orchestral laugh and fell to his knees beside Simmy Hollister. This abrupt maneuver threw a brand-new scare into Simmy, who bounced up and started to run, but Buster grabbed his leg.

"Come back here, boy! Can't you take a joke?"

"Joke?"

"Sholy. I was jes' pranking."



Dazed by the dizzily manipulated poker, Buster retreated against the balustrade, which broke. He fell backward, went rolling and tumbling to the sidewalk.

Simmy tried to laugh, and worked swiftly with both hands. He didn't know what would become of the money that his volunteer assistant was picking up, and showed relief when Buster rose and delivered the scrapings.

"Count yo' money, Simmy. Ef one nickle's missin', I'll give you another."

"It's all here," the boy announced.

"Dat's good! Now den, Brer Hollister, pay yo' dues to de president, right longside o' mine. Me an' you bofe—us pays together."

Up to this illuminating moment, Old Reliable had failed to see the point of Buster's joke. Now he caught on to its subtle humor—two members were paying eight dollars and eighty cents.

"Dis puts you square, Simmy." The president laughed. "Go down to my seckyterry an' claim yo' receipt."

"Yas, suh. Yas, suh." Simmy grinned, and wagged himself all over like a stump-tailed fice, when Buster patted him on the shoulder and suggested:

"Come 'long. Les's go to Copelain's an' git a bottle o' pop—jes' to prove d'ain't no hard feelin's."

The mellow comradeship of reconciliation lured the Reverend Brown to commit a social error; he smilingly stepped forth from his doorway and extended a hand to Buster.

"Howdy, Brer Grillo? Ed Grillo? I used to know you *real* good—at Pote Gibson."

Buster menaced him with hands clenched and the long arms of a gorilla.

Buster, the Catspaw

"You never knowed me nowhar. Now git!"

Traveling as indicated by a commanding finger, a pair of long black coat tails flapped the Reverend Brown's departure, and old Zack laughed at Buster's second joke.

"Dat's fine! Fine! He mighty worrisome, wid so much talk."

This rapid shifting of comedy situations gave Simmy the fidgets. He didn't know whether to run or to stand until Buster reassured him.

"Now, Brer Hollister. Us three kin go to Copelain's."

No moment of higher stepping exhilaration ever came to Simmy Hollister; he marched along Washington Street between a distinguished president and the famous Buster Manny. Recognition as man and brother loosed the effervescence of Simmy's soul and the shackles of his tongue. Which caused Simmy to overspeak himself.

"I sho' will be glad to c'lect my fo' thousan' dollars on Sad'd'y night."

The other men stopped dead in their tracks; and Simmy took but no more step, being jerked back by Buster Manny, like a runaway calf at the end of his rope. Old Zack half squatted, cut his eye round to Buster, and began explaining.

"Simmy, you's on de wrong road. My 'sociation don't pay fo' thousan' dollars. It pays three dollars on ev'y 'thousan' from de day you tuk yo' policy to de day you gits married. Onderstan?"

From all appearances, old Zack was seeking to lead a simple-minded gosling through the ramifications of his daily plan. But whether Simmy followed or whether Simmy got lost, it made no difference to Zack—for there was Buster Manny, who had promised to collect out of his hide; and Zack gaged the effect of his words on Buster. Was Buster converted to the dogma of three dollars per day, or did he yet cling to a heresy of four thousand dollars flat? Zack could not be sure; in harrowing suspense he studied the drayman's face until Buster gave a knowledge wink, and added his endorsement:

"De president's right, Simmy. Dat's what you git."

"But how much did Alec git?" the boy persisted. Although he addressed his question to Zack, it was Buster Manny who replied.

"Same as you. Same as you."

"Better'n dat, Buster," old Zack harmonized, with a soft pedal. "Simmy's gwine to c'lect a heap mo' dan Alec, 'cause Simmy never got married in sech a scramble. Y'onderstan', Simmy, de longer you waits de mo' you c'lects."

This was an explanation which explained, even to the density of Buster Manny. At first a gleam, then a brilliant sunshine of comprehension lighted his countenance. He caught the idea and urged the profitable course.

"Now, Simmy, de way to do is jes' put off yo' weddin' fer 'bout a month—maybe two months; den you'll c'lect a lot. You'll git—lemme see—Uncle Zack, what size policy he got?"

"Him an' Lindy toggeder, dey got fo' thousan'." And upon Zack's answer, Buster based an accurate computation.

"On fo' thousan', Simmy—lemme figger, lemme figger, you'll c'lect twelve dollars a day—jes' by settin' down an' doin' nothin'."

This appealed to Simmy as an ideal job.

"Maybe I better axe ma 'bout puttin' off dat weddin'."

"Don't axe nobody." Buster slapped him on the back. "Me an' you ought to be men enough to settle dis 'twixt ourselves."

"Sho' is." Simmy stiffened up.

"Dat's de way fer a man to talk," the big drayman applauded.

"Here's a dime. Run git you two bottles o' pop."

As Simmy loped off in one direction, Old Zack made a false start in the other, for Buster nabbed him.

"Leggo Buster; leggo! I gotter git back, to de office."

"You gotter tarry here. How much is you c'lected?"

"Dis makes thirty-six dollars an' thirty cents."

"You's a long way yit from my fo' thousan'." Buster shook Zack like a rat and threw him off. "Hustle, ole nigger; hustle!"

"Fo' thousan'!" Buster, ain't you catch on to what I tole Simmy?"

Stolidly the drayman eyed him.

"Dat stuff goes fer Simmy, not fer me."

"Didn't you 'spress yo'self to Simmy 'bout waitin'? An' de longer he waits de mo' he gits."

"Sholy. I wuz stallin' Simmy—jes' same as you wuz."

A sickish sensation overcame Zack somewhere in the region of his belt-buckle. He must explain all over again, and began desperately.

"Brer Manny, I 'splained—"

"Lissen ole nigger: De onliest way you kin 'splain to me is wid

fo' thousan' simoleons nex' Sunday week. I aims to buy a auty-mobile-truck, an' quit foolin' wid mules. Git to yo' office. I'll chase niggers up dere to pay. Den I'm comin'."

The earnestness of his speech betrayed Buster's perilous agitation and drove Zack down the street, rustling like a scurry of leaves before the wind, now in little eddies, now whirling up and gone again. Members paid, and paid freely, chucking their money into a jack-pot which each gambler hoped to win. At the bottom of his own steps, Old Reliable paused, hat in hand, mopping off the sweat; then he breathlessly climbed the stair and inquired of Willie Jim,

"How many is paid?"

"Lemme lone! Ain't got time to count 'em."

Manifestly the secretary had no leisure. Members swarmed round his desk, shoved in their money, and stood waiting for the scrap of paper which established their financial status. Under normal conditions of equanimity, this harried president would have been jubilant at the old members paying again, and new members clamoring to join. Every time Willie Jim dished out a little square ticket, it meant ten, twenty, thirty cents for Zack. Yet he reaped no joy in amassing wealth. What doth it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own hide? In the midst of gaiety and gabble, their president stood apart, stewed in gloom, a melancholy man. Everybody talked except Zack—and one strange woman sitting all by herself in a corner, who kept on saying nothing to nobody, which should have roused suspicion.

As if attending a five-o'clock charcoal tea, negroes came and gossiped, and paid and gossiped, and gossiped and went. Late arrivals mentioned the fact that Buster Manny sent them. "An' when Buster Manny say do sumpin', you better do it, or dere'll be a rookus." At this member's allusion to Buster's prowess, the strange woman in the corner gave a disgusted sniff.

The crowd began to thin. Willie Jim was giving out receipts to the last few stragglers while Zack reconnoitered from his window. For some time he had eyed Buster, rounding up members on the opposite corner, buttonholing one negro after another, and administering to each his flying start across the street. In a minute or two, perhaps, Buster himself would be following—which indicated the psychological moment for Zack's evaporation. He planned to stroll casually into the hallway, avoiding all comment by Willie Jim, and beat it by the rear route. Preparatory thereto, he relighted a cigar and glanced for the last time from his window. Then the silent woman arose and spoke. Her first compressed utterance gave more than a hint that this woman could speak a mouthful.

"Mister," she said, quiet and calmlike, "you reckon Ed Grillo ain't comin' up here dis evening?"

"Ed Grillo?"

"In Vicksburg, he calls hisself 'Buster Manny.'"

"Oh! Buster?" Now, Zack knew whom she was talking about. "He's comin' in a few minutes. I takes you fer Miss Floretta, what Buster's fixin' to marry?"

"None o' yo' bizness!" the woman snapped.

The heat of fire from her eyes scorched old Zack; he saw the muscles twitching in a sturdy arm, saw a dark-brown face with features that suggested a Choctaw Indian, and black hair nearly straight. All of which he noted in a single squint, then doffed his Panama.

"An' what kin I do fer you, miss?"

"You's de boss up here?" she asked.

"I'm jes' de president, miss. Dat's all."

"Den I wants to 'sult wid you—private."

A distressed damsel seeking his aid must right gallantly excuse a gentleman's retirement. With Spottiswoodean courtesy, Zack held open the gateway for her to pass behind Willie Jim. Afterward, when gossipmongers so persistently interrogated Willie Jim, these facts were all he knew. A lady had called to see the president; they had talked together in the back room, with the door shut. Then the lady had returned to the office and quietly sat down near the stove.

One trifling detail of their interview controlled the subsequent and singular behavior of Old Reliable. The rear room had formerly been used as a secret storehouse for liquor. Numerous whisky-bottles lay in a corner, pathetically futile, and several round pasteboard boxes designed to contain the quart-size. This seemed to wake her memories, for the woman remarked:

"Dat was Ed's trouble. Folks could lead him anywhere wid a bottle."

"Lead 'im wid a bottle! Lead 'im wid a bottle!"

Zack communed with himself after his wrathful caller had

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returned to the front office. Three swift motions—a bottle in a container, a wrapping of paper, a bit of string—and he darted out of the back door to go sneaking through the alleys. In Vicksburg no man with such decoy under his coat need seek a retinue of friends and followers.

For two blocks Old Reliable avoided Washington Street, then entered that famous thoroughfare, sauntered down to Buster Manny's corner, and was passing him without a word when Buster's arm put out a stop-gate.

"Hole on, ole man! Hole on! Thought you wuz at de office."

"Lemme go. I'm in a hurry—had to git sump'n." And a guileless accident exposed the packet beneath his coat.

"What you got?" Buster demanded.

"Jes' sump'n de cunnel gimme."

"De cunnel?" Buster licked his dry lips. "He drinks good lickin'."

While the slow-thinking drayman mobilized his mind, old Zack jerked loose and half ran, diagonally, across the street, with Buster overtaking him.

"Look here, Buster"—Zack stopped and turned—"I axes you nice—don't come to my office—"

"What's hinderin' me?"

"I begs you to stay out. Dat'll jes' make trouble."

"Huh?" The thirsty negro grinned. "I loves yo' kind o' trouble."

From a strategic observation-post, the plug-hatted Bozeman and the artful Tabb smiled as they watched old Zack maneuvering to escape from their catspaw. And when Zack halted momentarily at the street door of his office, all the barber-shop idlers caught his appeal.

"Lissen to me, Buster: I done 'plored you not to come up here an' make a rookus."

Again, at the head of the stairway, Zack urged Buster to depart in peace, speaking loud enough for the woman inside to hear.

"Buster, please don't come pesterin' me 'bout dat benefit when you an' Floretta gits married."

This seemed a cue for Buster's entrance, with the president four steps in advance—a lead which Zack nimbly increased by a succession of jumps to the back door.

"What's de matter? What's de matter?" The astounded Willie Jim whirled from his desk, then instantly joined the president in a scrouging exit, just as the stove and stovepipe crashed downward and a cloud of soot uprose.

"Lawd Gawd, Uncle Zack!" He sniffed and sneezed. "Dat woman knocked Buster in de head wid a poker—he fell agin' de stove."

"I seen her." Zack nodded, and both

The next *Old Reliable Story* will appear in *June Cosmopolitan*.

What's It All About?

(Continued from page 57)

contracting parties already has a wife or a husband at the time the ceremony was performed." The judge, with ponderous humor, addressed his (now) clients.

"Have either of you been married before?"

"Thank heaven, no!" Joe replied for himself forcefully.

"And you?"—formally to Phyllis.

"Do I have to tell?"

Cosmopolitan for May, 1921

men braced themselves to defend their door, while a wordless but far from silent disputation raged in their lately peaceful quarters.

"Dar now," Zack chuckled; "I warned Buster not to come in."

Thrice they heard a heavy body strike the floor and three times struggle up again—and other sounds, like unto the mauling of a steer with a crowbar. At intervals, a man's voice. The woman never chirped. Then a rending of wood.

"Dar goes yo' railin'!" Willie exclaimed. Another crash.

"Dar! Dat's my desk."

"Don't worry," his president pacified him. "I'll buy a new desk."

In a moment of deathlike stillness, the excitement preyed on Willie Jim, and he whispered:

"Buster done kilt dat woman; don't need any police. You mought be fetchin' a ambulance fer Buster."

Now they could hear the shuffle of many feet climbing their front stairs. Together they abandoned the door and rushed into the hallway. Buster Manny came stumbling and backing out of the office, with both arms upraised to fend off the hurricane. Near the top of the stairs, half a dozen negroes thrust up their heads, and at them the woman shouted, "Clear de track, niggers!" and the black herd ducked out of sight.

Dazed by the dizzily manipulated poker, Buster retreated against the balustrade, which broke. He fell backward, went rolling and tumbling to the sidewalk, where his Fury swooped upon him before he could get up.

Not until then did Bozeman and Tabb begin to comprehend the dénouement of their conspiracy. What they saw was quite unsatisfactory—to themselves and to Buster. Their catspaw sprawled face downward, his wife sitting straddlewise, amidship, while she belabored fore and aft.

"Ed Grillo, dis'll learn you 'bout callin' yo'self 'Buster Manny,' an' skylarkin' wid Vicksburg wimmen. Whar's yo' mule an' dray?"

"Right yonder—nex' corner."

"Roust yo'self, nigger. Take dat dray an' drive straight home to Pote Gibson."

From the head of the stairway, Zack and Willie Jim enjoyed a view of the stage until Buster got up and passed out of sight, limping toward his dray.

"Look dere, Willie Jim! Jes like I say. I wouldn't axe no better pastime dan settin' here an' bluffin' Buster. 'Sides dat, us done saved fo' thousan' dollars."

"An' nobody can't blame you." Willie Jim observed. "All dem niggers heard you strivin' to keep Buster out o' here."

"Yes."

"Then I was married once."

"When?" The judge mopped his brow in astonishment, and Joe Kelley looked up hopefully.

"It was in 1917."

"Then this child is legitimate," the judge interposed eagerly.

"I suppose so. Whose is it?"



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"Isn't it yours?"
 "Lord, no! It was playing in the hall and came in when I did. I thought it was yours."

"Young lady, I'm a bachelor."
 "Then we're one sleeping child to the good," Phyllis summed up. "That's enough to start housekeeping with."

"But about this marriage of yours?"
 Joe, whose fortunes were more upset than anyone else's, insisted on sticking to the point. "Is your husband living?"

"I don't know. I've never seen him since the day we were married—haven't even heard from him."

"What's his name?"
 "Joseph Kelley—that's why I thought it was you, and why I was so upset about your marrying some one else. Until now I've never told anyone about being married. I just said I was engaged, to account for my not going round with the other fellows. I didn't dare tell dad any more than that until my husband came back. And I've been very miserable. When dad wanted to kill you, I didn't much care. It seemed the only thing that would satisfy me."

"It would doubtless satisfy you much more than it would me," Joe observed gloomily. "Although I suppose I might as well be dead as in this mess."

"Suppose we trace out this former marriage," suggested the judge. "You haven't seen your husband since the day you were married. Why not?"

"He was in the Rainbow Division and sailed the next morning. You see, we had just met the evening before. He had twenty-four hours' leave and was on his way from camp into New York city when the automobile he was riding in broke down in front of the house where I was visiting. I offered to show him the way to the station, and I did, but he missed a train, and then, after a while, he decided he wouldn't have much time to spend in the city, anyway, so I took him back to the house with me. They didn't have any room, but he slept on the billiard-table, and then, the next day, we were married secretly."

"That accounts for the marriage all right," remarked the judge; "but why didn't you hear from him?"

"I can't understand that either unless, in the excitement, he forgot to make a memorandum of my name."

"But you wrote to him?"
 "My letters came back unopened—all but the first one."

Joe cleared his throat.
 "I opened that one—it came to me by mistake—I was in the Rainbow myself—and after I got to know the handwriting, I turned the later ones back to the army post-office, sealed—they seemed sort of—"

He paused, searching for the right word.
 "They were," she supplied. "I cared a lot about him. I do even yet, now that I know he isn't you."

"Slightly mixed and not very flattering, but I comprehend." Practical difficulties occurring to him, Joe placed them before the judge. "In order to invalidate this marriage, I suppose it is necessary to prove that this other chap is still living?"

"Yes," confirmed the legal authority. "Which, considering that he hasn't been seen or heard from in nearly four years, is going to be difficult. The chances are that he"—the judge halted at a warning

Cosmopolitan for May, 1921

look from Joe—"that he—er—met somebody else and—"

"I wish you'd have said that he was killed, as you started to, rather than what you did say," Phyllis wailed. "I've thought of that some-one-else idea myself a hundred million times. He is so darn good-looking."

"Would you," Joe interpolated curiously, "prefer that the man you loved were dead rather than married to some one else?"

"Of course. Any woman would."
 "Then Margery is wishing that I was dead this very minute?"

"Undoubtedly."
 "My God!"

"That settles my interest in the problem of 'The Lady or the Tiger?'" the judge remarked abstractedly. "Up to the present, I would have cast my vote the other way—solely for humanitarian reasons."

A rather timid rap on the door presaged a variant on the usual method of entering the judge's office that morning.

"Come in," invited the judge.

It was Margery, half defiant, half tearful. She stood with her back to the door. "My brother Sam has urged me, against my better judgment, to come back and listen to your explanation."

"Good!" approved Joe cheerfully.
 "Where is good old Sam?"

"I left him in the car down-stairs. He's to keep watch, and, if I wave my handkerchief, he will come up and do what he intended to do in the first place."

"He'll never have to come up," Joe prophesied. "This can all be straightened out in a minute."

"Can it?" Margery doubted. "Well, begin."

"All there is to it," Joe began obligingly, "is that Phyllis here—"

"Do you call her 'Phyllis' already?"
 "Hang it, what can I call her? She really is Mrs. Kelley, but that sounds sort of formal, doesn't it? And—"

"Go on; call her 'Phyllis.' I don't care. It's really no affair of mine."

"Well, she," Joe began again, pointing non-committally to the blond vision, "thought I was some one else whom she met before the war, some one else by the same name and whom she married secretly. He was in the army and sailed the next day, and she has never heard from him since. Naturally, when she heard that Joe Kelley was going to marry some one else, she got excited and jealous."

"Don't you see?" pleaded Phyllis. "And my Joe Kelley was the best-looking thing!"

"Better looking than mine?" demanded Margery belligerently.

"If it's going to make you mad, I won't answer. Besides, your Joe Kelley is really mine, too—if the marriage ceremony has any weight in this state, and, while I don't mind his explaining things to you, I don't think he should go any further than that until somebody finds another Joe Kelley for me."

"But surely Joe doesn't love you?" postulated Margery. "Do you, Joe?"

"Why, I—" began the victim.
 "I refuse to let him answer," his wife interrupted. "He may have to live with me, and there is no use making our future life any harder than that of the average married couple, which is hard enough any way you look at it."

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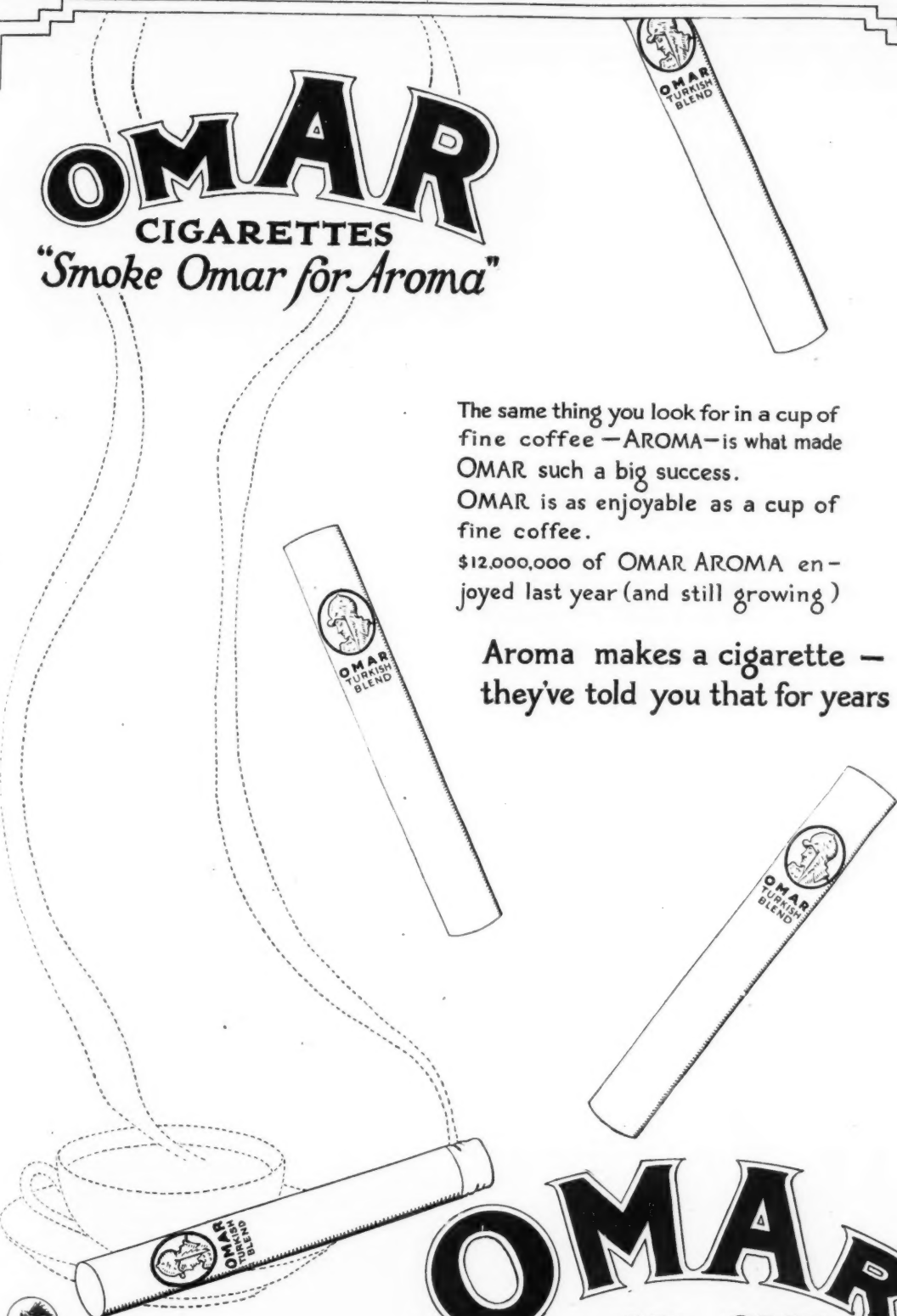
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"You ought to know," admitted Margery acidly.

"For heaven's sake, girls, don't scrap!" pleaded the bone of contention. "It isn't worth it."

"I don't know," Phyllis decided critically. "You're not so terrible—not like my Joe Kelley, I'll admit—but as husbands go nowadays, I suppose one might do worse."

"See!" exclaimed Margery. "She is falling in love with you already."

"She is not," Joe protested. "She's merely trying not to hurt my feelings."

Margery sniffed. "How can you tell what her intentions are? No man ever understood how deceitful and faithless a blonde can be."

"Faithless?" Phyllis was stung where it hurt the most. "Do you call it faithless that I have been true to a man I haven't seen in three years? What right have you to call me faithless when, at the first sign that your bridegroom might have known some other girls during his lifetime, you leave him flat at the altar, or the judge's desk? In my opinion, he was lucky to find out in time that you're a suspicious old—"

"Don't say it, Phyllis," urged Joe. "I want you girls to be friends."

"Let your Phyllis say whatever she wishes," Margery suggested, with poorly suppressed anger. "Nothing that you can do now will make any difference in a personality which is naturally handicapped by lack of breeding and discrimination."

"O Lord!"

"Do you mean," inquired Phyllis, with icy politeness, "that I am not as good as you are, Miss Whatever-your-name-is?"

"Please, Marge, don't get her infuriated! She has a revolver."

"Which I would scorn to use," Phyllis completed. "Here's the darn thing." She threw it into the corner, where it made a clatter that awakened the sleeping child to vociferous participation in the scene. "I'm not afraid of any snake that ever shook a rattle."

Joe flung himself into the breach—at least, he stepped between the two girls and put an arm round Margery. Solomon, had he been there, could have elicited no more convincing testimony. Joe had cast his die. If the law made him live with Phyllis now, he was up against it.

Both girls started to weep, Margery on Joe's shoulder, and Phyllis into her own handkerchief.

The judge felt a trifle snubbed, because he would willingly have furnished a weeping-post. In his chagrin, he picked up the howling child and attempted to soothe it. The results of this were nothing much except a louder and more startled yell.

As if in response to a call for help, a tired-looking middle-aged woman with a mop in her hand threw open the door.

"There you are!" she exclaimed with relief, and advanced to take the baby from the judge's inexperienced arms. "I thought the kid had maybe fell down the elevator-shaft, and I've been looking in the basement for him. I was cleaning next door, and he wandered off."

Phyllis, weeping, stood at the window, contemplating introspectively the hardness of her lot—married twice and nothing to show for it. By George, it wasn't fair for any one as good-looking as she knew she was to be stung so frequently.

It was while she was looking unhappily into the street that something she saw there made her give a little exclamation of surprise—of pleasure.

"There he is!" she almost shouted, and leaned out the window to wave her handkerchief wildly.

"There is who?" demanded Joe Kelley, instantly interested.

"My own darling," Phyllis threw over her shoulder excitedly; "my own darling Joe Kelley—my husband!"

"Where?" Even Margery ceased sobbing long enough to join in that question.

Both she and Joe moved to the window. Behind them, the scrub-lady craned her neck for a better view.

"He was in the street below—oh, I'd know him anywhere—and he knew me, for the minute I waved, he started for this building on the dead run. You can't see him now, because he just went in the entrance. I'm so happy—happy—happy!" She danced round the office to prove it. "And I won't hold a grudge against either of you for being so hateful to me. I could kiss the whole world—even you!" By which she meant Joe, for she flung her arms round his neck impulsively and planted a hearty buss upon his cheek.

She had no chance to unwrap her arms from that strictly Platonic embrace. That was done for her—that and much more. Her arms were not only forcibly unwrapped but she was further flung into the corner by the earnestness of the motive power.

She was so surprised by the onslaught that she did not recover until the same whirlwind force had thrown Joe to the floor and was proceeding to dust the office-rug with his unworthy carcass.

"I'll teach you to deceive my sister!" the force was saying. "Take that and that! If I hadn't seen it with my own eyes, I should not have believed it."

"Hit him again!" urged the scrub-lady, now so interested in other people's troubles she had entirely forgotten her own and let it squall.

"Joe!" The frightened cry came from the corner where Phyllis was slowly recovering her equilibrium and a few hairpins. "Joe darling, stop!"

"Stop! Don't make me laugh. Joe ain't doing anything." The whirlwind paid no more attention to her than that.

But he did notice the next thing that she did. Why? Because it was so noisy.

She fired off the revolver, which was in the same corner where she had found herself, and the report brought everyone in the room up standing and silent, wondering individually if the bullet was somewhere in his own person. Even the baby choked back its sobs. The battling newcomer looked at her for the first time.

"You!" was all he said.

He had sprung to his feet, abandoning a perfectly good choking grip on his best friend's throat as he did so, and met Phyllis half-way in a head-on collision which knocked her up into the air and down again into his arms.

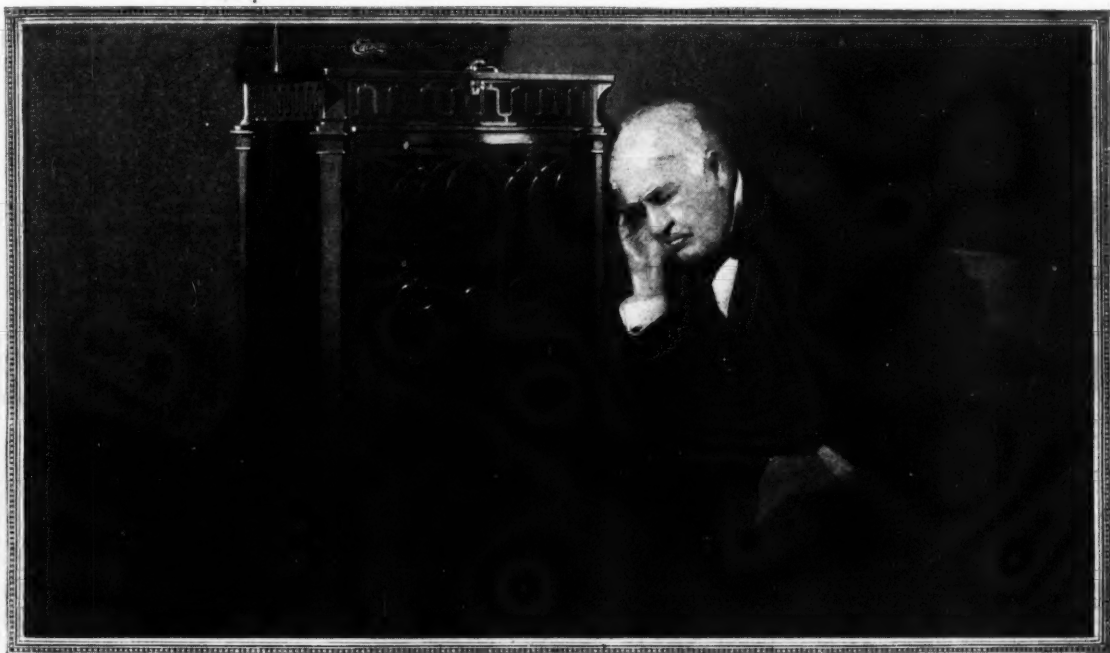
It seemed as if she belonged there. Anyway, she stayed for quite a while.

Meanwhile, Margery was bending over the abandoned victim of violence, and was attempting to put him together again with a few adhesive kisses scientifically applied.

Joe enjoyed this as much as was possible under the circumstances, but, finally, indignation got the better of him. He found

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bulletin "What Did Edison Do During the War?" This bulletin also contains the Navy Department's official announcement of Mr. Edison's war work.

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- 5—"What Did Edison Do During the War?"



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Of course, lots of things you leave to the doctor, and you should, but unfortunately most doctors have never been mothers and cannot always comprehend a mother's view-point.

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that the power of speech was returning to his lacerated vocal cords.

"What the conglomerated, double-distilled hell-fire do you mean by this? Get away from my wife, Sam Greene!"

"Your wife? This bunch of nothing much isn't your wife. She's my wife—aren't you, Phyl?"

"I thought so," she began doubtfully, "but he—my other husband there—called you Sam Greene, and my name is Mrs. Joe Kelley."

The army officer slapped his thigh.

"By George, that accounts for it!"

"For what?"—from the mystified five—Margery, Phyllis, the scrub-woman, Joe, and the judge—everybody but the still inarticulate baby.

"For my not getting any letters from you. I forgot that on the day I met you I was out on old Joe Kelley's pass. I guess I was too busy winning you to explain about that. You see how it was, don't you?" he went on. "I was among those selected from our outfit for embarkation for France, and we who were to go were confined to the camp and couldn't get a pass for love or money. Well, I just had to get out."

"Why?" demanded Phyllis suspiciously. "Well," Sam admitted reluctantly, "there was a girl I just had to say good-by to. That was before I met you. I was on the way to see her when that car stopped and—well, you were there, and you know the rest. I was afraid to tell anyone that Kelley wasn't my real name or I would probably have been arrested for being A. W. O. L. and left behind when my outfit sailed. I meant to straighten it out in my first letter to you, but I found I didn't know your address, and when you didn't write to me, I just naturally let my heart break and tried to drown my sorrow in devotion to duty."

Phyllis sniffed skeptically and let it go at that.

"I was more irresponsible in those days than I am now," Sam contributed further. "I couldn't afford a wife before," he added philosophically, "but now that I've got an officer's pay, I can support one."

Phyllis sniffed skeptically and let it go at that.

"I was more irresponsible in those days than I am now," Sam contributed further. "I couldn't afford a wife before," he added philosophically, "but now that I've got an officer's pay, I can support one."

Cosmopolitan for May, 1921

"How?" demanded Joe sharply. "I have a lot of friends in the service who would like to know."

Sam Greene ignored the impertinence.

"The question now is who is married to who?"

The judge was appealed to.

"None of you is legally married," he decided.

"Good!" said Sam. "Then we can get a new set of licenses and start all over."

"Not until these other ceremonies are annulled."

"But you just said that neither of them is legal."

"It doesn't matter. They have to be annulled, anyway. It's the law."

"It's a darn funny law that says something ain't legal enough to be binding but is legal enough to keep you from being free."

"I can explain it," offered the judge.

"No," declined Sam hastily. "I haven't seen this taffy-topped trifter for three years, and I haven't got time to find out why I can't have her now. I have to report back to my post to-morrow; so I'll take her with me and untangle her later. Are you two," he spoke to Joe and his sister, "in favor of a new deal and a double wedding?"

"Yes," said Joe, and, "No," said Margery, but not very loud.

"Unanimous," declared Sam. "Will you perform the ceremonies, Judge?"

"It's against my better—"

"But will you?"

"If you insist."

"All right; come on. The procession will form in front of the marriage-license window."

Laughing and chatting, the two men led off arm in arm, and the two girls fell in behind absolutely entwined. At the door, the latter pair stopped to kiss—they who had been just about to destroy each other's permanent waves.

As they vanished through the door, Margery confided to Phyllis,

"I think you're a darling."

So did the judge, but there was no one for him to tell it to but the scrub-lady.

The Man Who Looked Like Edison

(Concluded from page 73)

he had accepted the explanation, had accepted the barred windows, the steel door, the guard outside, and the solicitous visitors.

But he had been deceived, perhaps because they feared he would not otherwise consent to play the part they assigned to him. For the Ernie in the films was no great inventor but an insane old man; the bars at his windows were the bars of a madman's cell. Within, this madman potted at his mad designs, and the guard at the door was not to keep others out but to keep him in there; and the solicitous visitors paid him no respect but only humored his poor illusion. There were tears in my eyes before the thing was finished—tears of pity for Ernie, and tears of hot anger at the callous brutality of those who had contrived this thing. I thought of legal action on his behalf; but they had, no doubt, been wise enough to have him sign a release from all responsibility. There was nothing that could be done.

I avoided the service-station for the week thereafter; I could not bear to see

Ernie. But at last it was necessary to go in. I planned to tell him, if he asked, that I had missed seeing the film. So much poor kindness I could do the man.

When I drove in, he was on the washing-floor, working about a limousine. The old, ragged hose was in his hand; the sprinkler he had designed was still attached to the ceiling, but unused. I parked my car in an empty space and walked across to him. He looked up with his old timidly amiable smile, and I saw that the alert confidence and the sense of power were utterly gone.

"There's a grease-cup missing, Ernie, from the rear end," I told him. "If you see one kicking around—"

"Why, yes; sure," he promised me.

I hesitated, then said smilingly,

"Won't need to bother with them in a year or two—"

By his answer, I knew that the dreams were gone and the vision was fled.

"Oh, I guess we'll have to keep puttering on in the same old ways," said Ernie Budder hopelessly.

Alias the Lone Wolf

(Continued from page 80)

was not traveling to Paris that night after all; it was on Dupont's account alone that he had taken so much trouble to secure an exchange of reservations.

And when Monsieur le Comte de Lorgnes had wavered through the gateway in tow of a luggage-laden porter, and Dupont had torn himself away from his fond familiar and lunched after the count, and Lanyard, after a little wait, had followed in turn, he was able to see for himself that Dupont had contrived to be berthed in the same carriage with de Lorgnes.

Well weary, Lanyard proceeded to his own compartment in the car ahead and turned in. But he was not of those who sleep well on trains. In spite of his extreme fatigue, he woke up every time the *rapide* stopped. He was awake at Dijon, at four in the morning, and again at Laroche, about a quarter after six. There, peering out of the window to identify the station, he was startled to see the broad, round-shouldered back of Albert Dupont making away across the rails—leaving the train.

It was not feasible to dress and pursue, even had it been wise. And Lanyard was vexed. Dupont, he felt, was hardly playing fair, after giving one every reason to believe he meant to go through to Paris.

The newspapers of Paris, that day, had a sensation that crushed into insignificance the news from Château de Montalais. In a compartment which he had occupied alone on the night *rapide* from Lyons, a man had been found with his throat cut, his clothing ripped to rags, even his luggage slashed to ribbons.

Whether through chance or intention, every ordinary clue to the victim's identity was missing.

XIII

ATHENAI

In London, about noon of that day, a gentleman whom Lanyard most often thought of by the name of Wertheimer deciphered a code-message whose contempt for customary telegraphic brevity was quite characteristic of the sender.

With some editing in the way of punctuation, it follows:

DEAR OLD BEAN:

Please advise Préfecture de Police without revealing your source of information, unidentified man found murdered on *rapide* arriving Gare de Lyon eight-thirty this morning stopped yesterday Hôtel Terminus, Lyons, under name of Comte de Lorgnes. During entire evening before entraining he was shadowed by two *apaches*, one of whom, passing as Albert Dupont—probably recent and temporary alias—booked through to Paris occupying berth in same carriage with Lorgnes, but detained Laroche six-fifteen, murder remaining undiscovered till arrival in Paris. (An admirably succinct sketch of the physical Dupont is here deleted.) In return for gift of this opportunity to place Préfecture under obligations, please do me a service. As stranger in Paris I crave passionately to review Night Life of Great City but am naturally timid about going out alone after dark. Only society of beautiful, accomplished, well-



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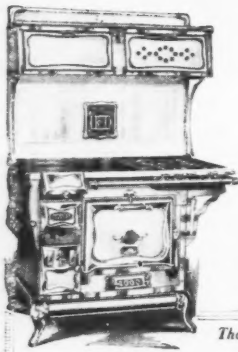
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informed, and agreeable lady of proved discretion can put me thoroughly at ease. If you can recommend one such to me by telegraph, stipulating her amiability must be in to function this evening, you may depend on my not hesitating to ask further favors as occasion may arise. Presume you have heard your old friend Duchemin, now missing, is suspected of looting jewels of Madame de Montalais, Château de Montalais, near Millau. He counts on your discretion to preserve secret of his innocence pending further advices. Paul Martin here stopping Hôtel Chatham. Toodle-oo.

N. L.

A telegram from London addressed to M. Paul Martin, Hôtel Chatham, Paris, was delivered late in the afternoon:

Préfecture tipped off. Many thanks. Heartfelt regrets poor Duchemin's success keeping out of jail. Uneasy about him as long as he remains at large. Fully appreciate you cannot trust yourself alone in the dark. Therefore cheerfully delegating preservation of your virtue while in Paris to Mlle. Athenais Reneaux, maiden lady mature charms whom I beg you will respect as you would my sister. Wishing you enjoyable intellectual evening—W.

It needed receipt of a *petit bleu*, while he was dressing for dinner, to cure Lanyard of an attack of premonitory shivers brought on by recollection of the awful truth that one is never really safe in trifling with an Englishman's sense of humor.

DEAR MONSIEUR MARTIN:

It is too sweet of you to remember your promise to ask me to dine the first time you came to Paris. Since you leave it to me, shall we say the Ritz, at half-past seven? In case your memory for faces is poor—it has been a long time since we met, hasn't it?—I shall be wearing the conventional fast black with my very best ingénue expression, and my feather fan will be flame-colored.

Always to you,

ATHENAIIS RENEUX.

Now, that sounded more like.

Mademoiselle Athenais Reneaux lived up in most gratifying fashion to the tone of her note. In the very beginning she demonstrated excellent discretion by failing to be on hand and eager when Lanyard strolled into the Ritz on the minute of his appointment. To the contrary, she was all of twenty-five minutes late—a circumstance so consistently feminine as to rob their meeting of any taint of the extraordinary.

She swept spiritedly into the lounge of the Ritz, a tall, fair girl, very good-looking indeed, and brilliantly costumed, and placed Monsieur Paul Martin in one glance on the instant of his calculated start of recognition. At once her face lighted up with a charming smile.

"Paul!" she cried, in a clear and lilting voice. "I'm so glad! It's been simply ages. And looking so well! I don't believe you've changed a bit."

The nicely judged pitch of her voice, neither so high nor so low as to attract more than passing attention, won approval, which Lanyard put into the pressure of his lips upon her hand and the bow that accompanied it.

"And you, Athenais—always exquisite, but to-day—Truly one has never seen you looking better."

"Flattery," she commented. "But I love it!"

Meanwhile, her gaze, that seemed so constant to his eyes, reviewed the other

Cosmopolitan for May, 1921

people in the lounge in one swift, searching glance, and returned to Lanyard's with a drooping gesture of the lashes, signifying that there was no one present likely in her esteem to prove dangerous to their peace of mind.

"Flattery?" To you? But impossible!"

He delighted her, and she showed it openly. But her lips said only,

"Have I kept you waiting a frightfully long time, poor boy?"

"Let your appetite accuse you."

"But I am starving!"

"Then, as I take it, nothing on earth can prevent our going in to dinner."

Lanyard had already consulted with the *maître d'hôtel* over the menu and the reservation. As the two settled down at a table on the side of the room, not conspicuously far from any other in use, their iced melon was waiting to be served.

"Always the most thoughtful of men," Mademoiselle Reneaux declared. "I would adore dining with you, Paul, even if I didn't adore you for yourself."

"One is well repaid when one's modest efforts are so well appreciated."

"Blague, my friend; sheer blague. You know you relish a good dinner of your own ordering far more than anybody's appreciation, even mine."

The waiters had retired.

"Mademoiselle," said Lanyard, in more formal vein, "I am sure, underestimates my capacity for appreciation. May one venture to compliment *mademoiselle*, who is marvelous in so many bewitching ways?"

"Why not, *monsieur*? Was ever music sweeter?" The girl laughed; then her eyes sobered. "*Monsieur* received a telegram this afternoon?"

"Yes, *mademoiselle*. And you?"

"It is here, since I am. May I see yours?"

With a gay gesture, she handed over her telegram from London and took his in exchange.

The ordinary cipher of the B. S. S. was as readily intelligible to both as if the messages had been couched in open French or English.

Lanyard read:

Kindly place yourself beginning with dinner to-night and for duration his stay in Paris at the commands of Paul Martin, Hôtel Chatham, lunatic, but harmless and of great value to us. He seems to be at present concerned with some affair outside our knowledge, but presumably desperate, else he would not be interested. Please exert best endeavors to get him out of France alive as soon as possible.

The girl was laughing as she returned Lanyard's telegram and received her own.

"Mature charms!" she pouted. "Enjoyable intellectual evening!" Oh, how depressing! Poor Paul! But you must have felt discouraged."

"I did—at first."

"And afterward?"

"Disappointed."

"And are you going to obey that injunction to treat me as somebody's sister?"

"Never in my life!"

"How, then?"

"As anybody's wife."

Perplexity knitted a little pucker in her delicately lined brows.

"Paul, you couldn't speak French so well and be an Englishman."

"I assure you, Athenais, I am—mentally—a native of France."

She sighed luxuriously.

"What an amusing prospect! And this is the sort of man at whose commands I am required to place myself!"

"Not required, Athenais; requested—begged, besought!"

"I like that better. And," she inquired demurely, "may one ask what are *monsieur's* commands?"

"First, you will continue to flirt with me as at present—outrageously."

"Even when you make it so difficult?"

"And then to waste an evening in my society."

"And what do we do with this evening of such questionable value?"

"We finish dinner here at our leisure. We smoke and chat a while in the lounge, if you like, or, if nothing better offers, we go to a play; and then you will take me by the hand and show me how Paris amuses itself in these days of its nocturnal decadence. You will dutifully pretend to drink much more champagne than is good for you and to be enjoying yourself as you seldom have before. If I discover an interest in people I may chance to see, you will be good enough to tell me who they are and—other details concerning their ways of life."

"If I know."

"But I am sure you know everyone worth knowing in Paris, Athenais."

"Then—if I am right in assuming you are looking for some person in particular—"

"You have reason, *mademoiselle*."

"Who is it you're looking for in Paris after midnight?"

"Le Comte de Lorgnes." *Mademoiselle* Reneaux looked blank. "Madame la Comtesse de Lorgnes." The young woman shook her head. "Both of a class sure to be conspicuous in such places as Maxim's," Lanyard explained. "The names, then, are probably fictitious."

"If you could describe them—"

"Useless, I am afraid; neither is a strikingly uncommon type. Are you, then, acquainted with a man named Phinuit, an American?"

"No."

"Mr. Whitaker Monk, of New York?"

"The millionaire?"

"That is quite possible."

"He made his money in munitions, I believe"—the girl reflected—"or perhaps it was oil."

"Then you do know him?"

"I met him one night, or, rather, one morning, several weeks ago, with a gay party that joined ours at breakfast at *Pré Catalan*. A quaint little stupid."

"Pardon, *mademoiselle*?"

"I was thinking of Whitaker Monk."

"Quaint, I grant you. But hardly little or stupid. A tall man, as thin as a diet, with a face like a comic mask of Tragedy."

"Paul dear," said Athenais Reneaux, more in sorrow than in anger, "somebody has been taking advantage of your trusting nature. Whitaker Monk is short, hopelessly stout, and the most commonplace person imaginable."

"Then it would appear," Lanyard commented ruefully, "one did wisely to telegraph London for a keeper. Let us get hence, if you don't mind, and endeavor to forget my shame in strong drink and the indecorous dances of an unregenerate generation."



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After a Palmolive Shampoo your hair is

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Wash the length in this thick lather and then rinse. This is easy, as water

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Brush thoroughly (with a clean brush) and then examine the quality of your hair.

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XIV

DIAMOND CUT DIAMOND

LANYARD and Athenais Reneaux had dawdled over dinner and coffee and cigarettes with so much tacit deliberation that, by the time Lanyard suggested they might move on, it was too late for a play and still a bit too early to begin the contemplated round of all-night restaurants. Also, it was too warm for a music-hall.

So they killed another hour at the Ambassadeurs, where they were fortunate in getting good places and the entertainment imposed no strain upon the attention, where, too, the audience, though heterogeneous, was sufficiently well dressed and well mannered to impart to a beautiful lady and her squire a pleasant consciousness of being left very much to themselves in an amusing expression of a civilization satisfyingly cynical and self-sufficient.

But that was so wherever they went that night; and, in a sense, they went everywhere.

If there were anybody or thing a girl of her age—Athenais was about twenty-five—shouldn't know, she knew him, her, or it; if there were any place she shouldn't go, she either went or had been there; if there were anything she shouldn't do or say or think or countenance, those things she—within limitations—did and said and thought and accepted or passed over as matters of fact and of no consequence. And though she observed scrupulously certain self-imposed limitations, she never made this obvious; she simply avoided what she chose to consider bad taste with a deftness and tact that would have seemed surprising in a woman of the great world twice her age. And with it all she preserved a sort of champagne effervescence of youthful spirits and an easy-going camaraderie incomprehensible when one took into consideration the disillusioning circumstances of her life, her vocation as a paid government spy, trusted with secrets and worthy of her trust, dedicated to days of adventure always dangerous, generally sordid, and like at any time to prove deadly.

Young, beautiful, admirably poised, accomplished, and intelligent, she should by rights have been wrapped up in love of some man her peer in all these attributes. But she wasn't; or she said she wasn't, in one of those moments of gravity which served to throw into higher relief the light-heartedness of her badinage with Lanyard; asserting an entirely willing disposition to stand aside and play the pensive, amused, indulgent spectator in the masque of love danced by a world mad for it, grasping for love greedily, even in its cheapest shapes and guises.

"If it comes," she sighed, "it will find me waiting, and not unwilling. But it will have to come in another form than those I know about."

"My dear," said Lanyard, "be unafraid; it always does."

She called herself Athenais Reneaux, but she didn't pretend to Lanyard that she had no better title to another name. Her French was of the purest, a delight to listen to, yet she was, in fact, less French than English. Her paternal forebears to the third generation had lived in England and married Englishwomen, she said, and more than this much about herself,

nothing; perhaps deriving some gratification from leaving such broad fields of conjecture open to the interest which an enigmatic personality never fails to excite.

"But I think you're quite as much of a mystery as you pretend to see in me. It's rather nice, don't you think? At least, it gives us an interest in each other aside from sentiment. Some day, perhaps, we'll each know all."

"Now God forbid!"

"Are you so afraid of learning my girlish secrets, then? I don't believe you. I don't believe you'd even be interested."

"Athenais!" Lanyard protested, in a hollow voice.

"Non, non ami." She judged him shrewdly with narrowed, smiling eyes. "You flirt with far too much finish, you know. It can't be done to such perfection when the heart's truly entangled. But for one thing—and if only you'd be a little more tragic about your disappointments to-night; for you haven't yet asked me a single question about anybody we've met."

"No. Thus far we've drawn every cover blank," he groaned; for it was after three in the morning.

"Very well. But for this and that, I'd be tempted to think you were sleuthing on the trail of some female fair but faithless. But you're taking all with entirely too much resignation."

"I'm having a good time."

"It's pretty of you to tell me so. But that's not the reason for your self-complacency—"

"See here," Lanyard interrupted, sitting up and signaling to the waiter for his bill: "If I let you run on the way you're heading, you'll presently be telling me something you've found out about me and I don't want to hear."

"Oh, very well," she sighed. "I'm sure I don't wish to embarrass you. But I will say this: Men of your uncertain age don't go round with those contented eyes unless they're prosperously in love."

"Oh, come along!" Lanyard growled, offering to rise. "You know too confounded much."

"Where now?" she inquired, without stirring.

He had a shrug of distaste.

"Maxim's, I presume. Come along."

She shook her head vigorously.

"Shan't!" His eyebrows rose in mute inquiry. "Because I don't want to," she explained, with childlike candor. "I'm tired of being dragged around and plied with drink. I want to dance, and you haven't asked me in fully half an hour; and you're a heavenly dancer—and so am I." She thrust back her end of their wall table and rose. "If you please, monsieur."

One could hardly resent such charming impertinence. Lanyard drew a long face of mock patience, sighed a heroic sigh, and followed her through the huddled tables to the dancing-floor. A bewildering look rewarded him as they swung into the first movement of a tango.

"Do you know you are a dangerous man, Monsieur Paul Martin?"

"Oh, mademoiselle!"

"Such fortitude, such forbearance—when I ought to be slapped—enchant me. I submit. It shall be as you wish; on to Maxim's—after this one dance. You know, it's the last really good music we'll

have to dance to—our last dance together, perhaps—who knows?—forever!”

She pretended to be overcome; the lithe body in his embrace sketched a fugitive seizure of sadness, drooping with a wistful languor well suited to the swooning measures to which they moved and postured.

Then suddenly he saw her lashes sweep up to unveil eyes at once mirthful and admonitory; her hungry mouth murmured incongruously an edged warning.

“Play up, Paul—play up to me! We dance too well together not to be watched; and if I’m not mistaken, some one you’re interested in has just come in. No; don’t look yet—just remember we’re madly enamored, you and I—and don’t care a rap who sees it.”

Stung by her words into a spirit of emulation, Lanyard achieved an adequate seeming of response to the passion, feigned or real, with which the woman infused the patterned coquetry of their steps.

Between lips that stirred so little their movement must have been indiscernible, he asked,

“Who?”

In the same manner, the reply came: “Don’t talk. This is too divine! Just dance.”

He obeyed, deliberately shut out of his thoughts the warning she had given him, and let himself go.

On a sonorous phrase the music ceased. A flutter of applause ran round the tables. Lanyard mastered a sense of daze that he saw reflected in the opening eyes of the woman as she slipped from his arms.

On the way to their table they were intercepted by a woman who, with two cavaliers, had, since the moment of her entrance, been standing near the door of the restaurant, apparently spellbound with admiration. Through a rising clatter of tongues, her voice cut clearly, but not at all unpleasantly:

“Athenais! It is I—Liane!”

At the sound of her name, Athenais turned with a perfectly indicated start of surprise which she promptly translated into a little joyful cry. A living pillar of ivory satin and precious stones ran into her arms, embraced her ardently, kissed both her cheeks, then, releasing her, half turned to Lanyard.

Glints of trifling malice winked behind the open interest of troubling, rounded eyes of violet. Lanyard knew himself known. So he had sacrificed for nothing his beautiful beard!

He uttered a private but heartfelt “Damn!” and bowed profoundly as the woman, tapping Athenais on the arm with a fan crusted with diamonds, demanded, “Present instantly, my dear, this gentleman who tangoes as I have never seen the tango danced before!”

Forestalling Athenais, Lanyard replied, with a whimsical grimace,

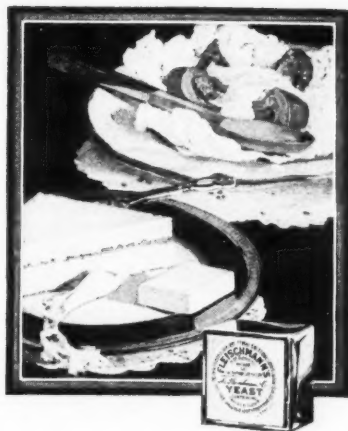
“Is one, then, so unfortunate as to have been forgotten by Madame la Comtesse de Lorgnes?”

This overt notification of the success of his quest, Athenais Renaux received without one sign other than a look of dawning puzzlement.

“But *monsieur* is mistaken,” the other stammered, biting her lip.

“Surely one cannot have been so stupid!” Lanyard apologized.

“But this is Mademoiselle Delorme,” Athenais said. “Monsieur Paul Martin.”



New importance for a familiar food

*Many physicians are recommending yeast—
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ONE vital element in food without which we cannot keep fit! This new discovery of science is startling thousands of men and women today.

Are we getting enough of this single element—this vitamine—in our everyday meals? Without it, scientists are agreed, we fall off in health.

A number of foods, notably spinach, contain this vitamine. But from many of our everyday foods it has been removed by the process of manufacture or preparation.

The richest known source of this vitamine is yeast. That is why thousands of men and women are adding the familiar little cake of Fleischmann's Yeast to their diet—to build up increased resistance to disease and to maintain vigorous health and energy.

So great has been the scientific interest in this new importance of yeast, that its value has been tested in leading

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Yeast is a food, highly digestible, entirely wholesome. It is assimilated in the body just like any other food. Only one precaution: if you are troubled with gas dissolve yeast in boiling water before taking it.

Eat from 1 to 3 cakes a day of Fleischmann's Yeast. Have it on your table so that everyone can eat it with their meals. Eat it before or between meals if you prefer. You will quickly learn to like its taste. Try it on bread or buttered toast; in milk, water or fruit juices; or just plain.

Place a standing order with your grocer for Fleischmann's Yeast, and get it fresh daily.

To learn more about the newly discovered importance of yeast, send for booklet, “The New Importance of Yeast in Diet.” THE FLEISCHMANN COMPANY, Dept. T-23 701 Washington Street, New York, N. Y.

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Thus Fleischmann's Yeast is a corrective food. Taken regularly over a period of time, from two to four weeks, it helps restore normal body functions and gradually replaces laxatives. From 1 to 3 cakes a day is the usual amount.

Liane Delorme! Those syllables were like a spoken spell to break the power of dark enchantment which had hampered Lanyard's memory ever since first sight of this woman in the Café de l'Univers at Nant. A great light began to flood his understanding, but he was denied time to advantage himself immediately of its illumination; Liane Delorme was quick to parry and *riposte*.

"How strange *monsieur* should think he had ever known me by a name—what was it? But no matter. For now I look more closely, I myself cannot get over the impression that I have known *Monsieur*—Martin, did you say?—somewhere, sometime— But Paul Martin? Not unless *monsieur* has more than one name."

"Then it would seem that *mademoiselle* and I are both in error. The loss is mine." That gun spiked, Lanyard began to breathe more freely.

"It is not too late to make up that loss, *monsieur*." Liane Delorme was actually chuckling in appreciation of his readiness. "Surely two people so possessed with regret at never having known each other should lose no time improving their acquaintance! Dear Athenais, do ask us to sit at your table."

While the waiter fetched additional chairs, the woman made her escorts known: Messieurs Benouville and Le Brun, two extravagantly insignificant young men, exquisitely groomed and presumably wealthy, who were making the bravest efforts to seem unaware that to be seen with Liane Delorme conferred an unimpeachable *cachet*. Lanyard remarked, however, that neither ventured to assume proprietorial airs; while Liane's attitude toward them was generally indulgent, if occasionally patronizing and sometimes impatient.

Champagne frothed into fresh glasses. As soon as the band struck up another dance, Athenais drifted away in the arms of Monsieur Le Brun. Liane gazed round the room, acknowledged the salutations of several friends, signaled gaily to a pair of odalisques on the far side of the dancing-floor, and issued peremptory orders to Benouville.

"Go, Chu-chu, and ask Angèle to dance with you. She is being left to bore herself while Victor dances with Constance. Moreover, I desire to afflict Monsieur Martin with my confidences."

With the utmost docility, Benouville effaced himself.

"*Eh bien, Monsieur Duchemin?*"

"*Eh bien, madame le comtesse?*"

"By what appears, you have at last torn yourself away from the charming society of Château de Montalais. That was a long visit you made at the château, my old one."

"*Madame la comtesse* is well informed."

"One hears what one hears."

"One had the misfortune to fall foul of an assassin," Lanyard took the trouble to explain.

"An assassin?"

"The same *apache* who attacked—with others—the party from Montalais at Montpellier-le-Vieux."

"And you were wounded?"

Lanyard assented. The lady made a shocked face and appropriate noises.

"As you know," Lanyard added.

Liane Delorme pretended not to hear that last.

"And the ladies of the château," she inquired, "they were sympathetic, I trust?"

"They were most kind."

"It was not serious, this wound—no?"

"*Mademoiselle* may judge when she knows I was unable to leave my bed for nearly three weeks."

"What an experience! Still, not without its compensations, eh, *mon ami*?"

"That is as one regards it, *mademoiselle*."

"Oh! Oh!" There was any amount of deep significance in these exclamations. "One may regard that in more ways than one."

"Indeed" Lanyard agreed, with his most winning manner, "one may, for instance, remember that I recovered in good time to be in Paris to-night and meet *mademoiselle* without losing time."

"*Monsieur* wishes me to flatter myself into thinking he did me the honor of desiring to find me to-night?"

"Or any other. Do not depreciate the potency of your charms, *mademoiselle*."

"My friend," said Liane, with a pursed, judgmental mouth, "I think you are much too amiable."

"But I assure you, never a day has passed—no, nor yet a night, that I have not dwelt upon the thought of you since you made so effective an entrance to the château, a vision of radiant beauty, out of that night of tempest and fury."

Liane drooped a coy head.

"*Monsieur* compliments me too much."

"Impossible!"

"Is one, then, to understand that *monsieur* is making love to me?"

Lanyard pronounced coolly,

"No."

That won another laugh of personal appreciation.

"What then, *mon ami*?"

"Figure to yourself that one may often dream of the unattainable without aspiring to possess it."

"Unattainable?" Liane repeated in a liquid voice. "What a dismal word, *monsieur*!"

"It means what it means, *mademoiselle*."

"To the contrary, *monsieur*, it means what you wish it to mean. You should revise your lexicon."

"Now it is *mademoiselle* who is too flattering. And where is that good Monsieur Monk to-night?"

The woman overlooked the innuendo or, rather, buried it under a landslide of emotional acting.

"Ah, *monsieur*, but I am desolated, inconsolable! He has gone away. He has left France; he has returned to his barbarous America."

"And the excellent Phinuit?"

"That one as well."

"How long ago?"

"A week to-morrow they did sail from Cherbourg. It is a week since anyone has heard me laugh."

Lanyard compassionately fished a bottle out of the cooler and refilled her glass.

"Accept, *mademoiselle*, every assurance of my profound sympathy."

"You have a heart, my friend," she said, and drank with the feverish passion of the disconsolate.

"And one very truly at *mademoiselle's* service."

Liane sniffed mournfully and dabbed at her nose with a ridiculous travesty of a handkerchief.

"Be so kind," she said, in a tearful voice, though her eyes were quite dry and, if one looked closely, calculating; "a cigarette."

One inferred that the storm was over. Lanyard tendered his cigarette-case and then a match, wondering what next. What he had reason to anticipate was sure to come; the only question was, when. Not that it mattered when; he was ready for it at any time.

"But it is wonderful!" murmured Liane, pensive. And there was that in her tone to make Lanyard mentally prick forward his ears. "To encounter so much understanding in one who is a total stranger! *Monsieur* must not think me unappreciative."

"Ah, *mademoiselle*," he protested sadly, "but you forget so easily!"

"That we have met before, when I term you a total stranger?"

"Well—yes."

"It is because I would not be in *monsieur's* debt."

"Pardon?"

"I will repay sympathy with sympathy. I have already forgotten that I ever visited the Château de Montalais. So how should I remember I met *monsieur* there under the name of—but I forget."

"The name of Duchemin?"

"I never knew there was such a name—I swear!—before I saw it in type to-day."

"In type?"

"*Monsieur* does not read the papers?"

"Not all of them, *mademoiselle*."

"It appeared in *Le Matin* to-day, this quaint name 'Duchemin,' in a despatch from Millau stating that a person of that name, a guest of the Château de Montalais, had disappeared without taking formal leave of his hosts."

"One gathers that he took something else?"

"Nothing less than the world-known Anstruther collection of jewels, the property of Madame de Montalais."

"But I am recently from Château de Montalais, and in a position to assure *mademoiselle* that this poor fellow, Duchemin, is unjustly accused."

"But why, if innocent, did he run away?"

"I imagine, because he knew he would surely be accused, in which case ancient history would be resuscitated to prove him guilty in the mind of any sane court."

"Does one understand he had a history?"

"I have heard it intimated such was the case."

"But I remain in the dark. The theft presumably was not discovered till after his disappearance. Yet, according to your contention, he must have known of it in advance. How do you account for that?"

"*Mademoiselle* would make a famous *juge d'instruction*."

"That does not answer my argument."

"How is one to answer it? Who knows how Duchemin discovered the theft before the ladies of the château did?"

"Do you know what you make me think? That he was not as innocent as you assert."

"*Mademoiselle* will explain?"

"I have a suspicion that this Monsieur Duchemin was guilty in intention; but when it came to put his intention into execution, he found he had been anticipated. He would have been wiser to

Cosmopolitan for May, 1921

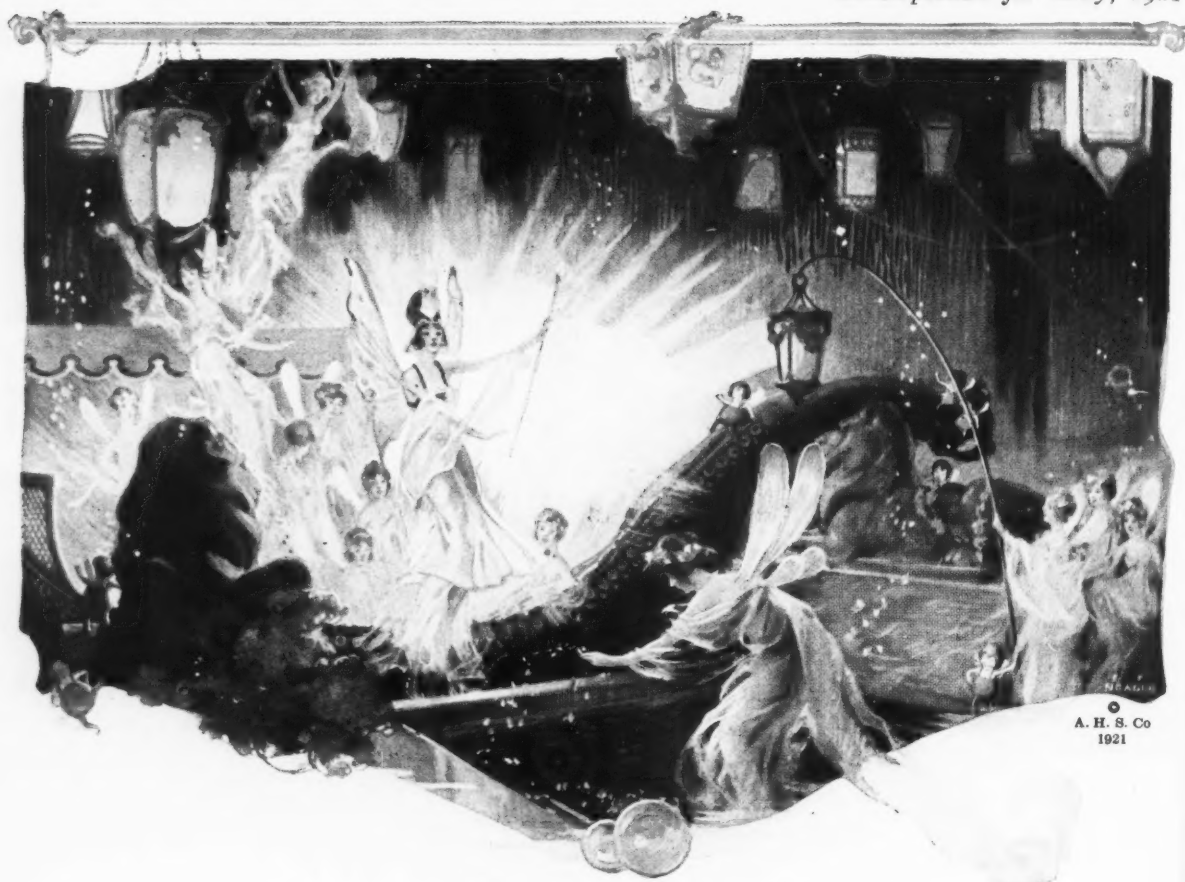


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stay and fight it out. The very fact of his flight confesses his guilt."

"Perhaps he did not remember that until too late."

"And now nothing can clear him. How sad for him! A chance meeting with one who is not his friend, a whispered word to the Préfecture or the nearest *agent de police*, and within an hour he finds himself in the Santé."

"Poor chap!" said Lanyard, with a doleful shake of the head.

"I, too, pity him," the woman declared. "*Monsieur*, against my prejudice, your faith in Duchemin has persuaded me; I am convinced that he is innocent."

"How good you are!"

"It makes me glad I have so well forgotten ever meeting him. I do not believe I should know him if I found him here in this very restaurant."

"It is *mademoiselle*, now, whose heart is great and kind."

"You may believe it well."

"And does *mademoiselle's* forgetfulness, perhaps, extend even farther into the so-dead past?"

"But, *monsieur*, I was a mere child when I first came to Paris, before the war. How could anyone reasonably expect my memory of those innocent girlish days to be exact? Regard that, even then, I met people by hundreds, as a young girl studying for the stage must. Is it likely one face would stand out in my memory more than another?"

"*Mademoiselle* does injustice to her memory. In some ways it is wonderful."

The woman looked suddenly aside, so that he could not see her face; but when she faced again his unbroken look of grave bewilderment, he discovered that she was really capable of tears.

"*Monsieur*," she gasped, "believe it or not, never before have I met one with whom I was so completely *en rapport*! And instantaneously! It is priceless, this! We must see more of one another."

"*Mademoiselle* offers me great honor—"

"Nothing less than my friendship."

"I would be indeed an ingrate to refuse it. But will not people talk?"

"What!" Amusement shook her again. "How talk? What more can they say about Liane Delorme?"

"Ah!" said Lanyard. "But about Madame la Comtesse de Lorgnes?"

"My friend, that was a good joke once; but now you must forget that name as utterly as I have forgotten another. De Lorgnes was nothing to me."

"I never thought he was."

"You had reason. Because we were thrown together, and our names were something alike in sound, it amused us—not the two of us alone, but all our party—to pretend I was *madame la comtesse*."

"He was really a count?"

"Who knows? It was the style by which he had always passed with us."

"Alas!" sighed Lanyard, and bent a somber gaze upon his glass.

Without looking, he was aware of a questioning gesture of the woman's head. He said no more, but shook his own.

"What is this?" she asked sharply. "You know something about de Lorgnes?"

"Had you not heard?" he countered, looking up in surprise.

"Heard?"

He saw her eyes stabbed by fear, and knew himself justified in his surmises. All day she had been expecting de Lorgnes, or word from him—all day, and all this night; and till now none had come. And purposely he delayed his answer till her

"You know this?"

"I was a passenger aboard the *rapide*, and saw the body before it was removed."

Liane Delorme made an effort to speak, but only her breath rustled harshly on her dry lips. She swallowed convulsively, turned to her glass, and found it empty. Lanyard hastened to refill it. She took the wine at a gulp, muttered a word of thanks, and offered the glass to be filled anew; but when this had been done, sat unconscious of it, staring witlessly at nothing, so lost to her surroundings that all the muscles of her face relaxed and her years peered through that mask of artifice which alone preserved for her the illusion and the repute of beauty.

Beyond the rank of tables which stood between him and the dancing-floor, Lanyard saw Athenais Reneaux sweeping past in the suave movements of a waltz. The girl's face wore a startled expression. Her gaze was direct toward the woman at Lanyard's side; then it shifted inquiringly to him. Lanyard warned her with a look to compose herself, then lifted an eyebrow and glanced meaningfully toward the doors. The least of nods answered him before Le Brun swung her toward the middle of the floor and other couples intervened.

Liane Delorme stirred abruptly.

"The assassin?" she demanded.

"Is there any clue?"

"I believe he is known by description, but missing."

"But you, my friend—what do you know?"

"As much as anybody, I fancy—except the author of the murder."

"Tell me."

Quietly, briefly, Lanyard told her.

Absorbed, with eyes abstracted and intent, and a mouth whose essential selfishness and cruelty were unconsciously unmasked by the compression of her lips, the woman heard him as he might have been a disembodied voice. Now and again, however, she nodded intently and, when he finished, had a pertinent question ready.

"You say a description of this assassin exists?"

"Have I not communicated it to you?"

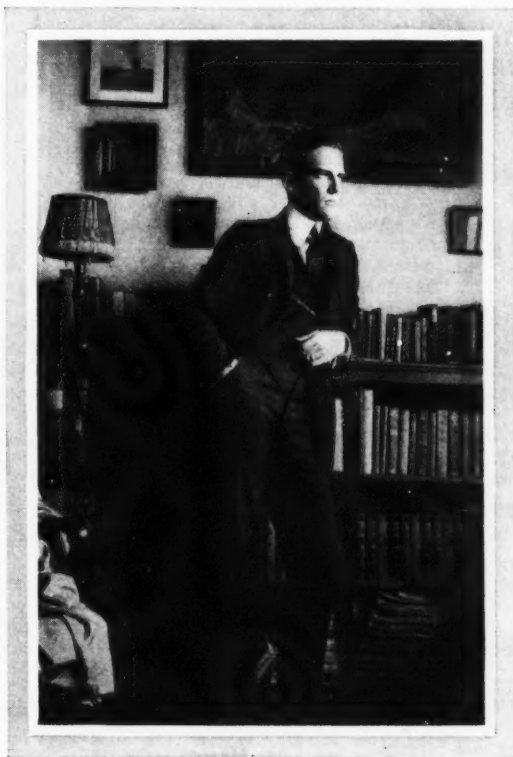
"But to the police?"

"Is it likely?" The woman gave him a blank stare. "*Pardon, mademoiselle*, but is it likely that the late André Duchemin would have more to do with the police than he could avoid?"

"You would see a cold-blooded crime go unavenged?"

"Rather than dedicate the remainder of my days to seeing the world through prison bars? I should say, 'Yes'—seeing that this assassination does not concern me, and I am guiltless of the crime with which I myself am charged. But you, who were a friend to de Lorgnes, know the facts, and nothing hinders your communicating them to the Préfecture."

But Lanyard was not dicing with Chance when he made this suggestion; he knew very well Liane Delorme would not go to the police.



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patience gave way and she was clutching his arm with frantic hands.

"What is the matter? Why do you look at me like that? Why don't you tell me—if there is anything to shock?"

"I was hesitating to shock you, Liane."

"Never mind me. What has happened to de Lorgnes?"

"It is in all the evening newspapers—the murder mystery of the Lyons *rapide*."

"De Lorgnes?"

Lanyard inclined his head. The woman sank back against the wall, her face ghastly beneath its paint.



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"That for the Préfecture!" She clicked a finger-nail against her teeth. "If only we knew the name of that *sale cochon*!"

"We do."

"We, *monsieur*?"

"I, at least, know one of the many names doubtless employed by the assassin."

"And you hesitate to tell me?"

"Why should I? No; but an effort of memory—" Lanyard measured a silence, seeming lost in thought, in reality timing the blow and preparing to note its effect. "Albert Dupont," he announced abruptly.

Unquestionably the name meant nothing to the woman. She curled a lip.

"But that is any name!" Then, thoughtfully, "You heard his companion of the café call him that?"

"No, *mademoiselle*. But I recognized the animal as Albert Dupont when he boarded the train at Combe-Redonde that morning, and, unnoticed by him, traveled with him all the way to Lyons."

"You recognized him?"

"I believe it well."

"When had you known him?"

"First when I fought with him at Montpellier-le-Vieux, later when he sought to do me in on the outskirts of Nant. He was the fugitive chauffeur of Château de Montalais."

"But—name of a sacred name!—what had that one to do with de Lorgnes?"

"If you will tell me that, there will be no more mystery in this sad affair."

The woman brooded heavily for a moment.

"But if it had been you he was after, I might understand—"

He caught the sidelong glimmer of her eye upon him, dark with an unuttered question.

But the waltz was at an end; Athenais and Le Brun were threading their way through the intervening tables toward then.

The interruption could not have been better timed; Lanyard was keen to get away. He had learned all that he could reasonably have hoped to learn from Liane Delorme in one night. He knew that she and de Lorgnes had been mutually interested in the business that took the latter to Lyons. He had the testimony of his own perceptions to prove that news of the murder had come as a great shock to her. On that same testimony he was prepared to swear that, whatever part, if any, she had played in the robbery, she knew nothing of "Albert Dupont."

Yet one thing more Lanyard knew: that Liane suspected him of knowing more than he had told her. But he wasn't sorry she should think that; it gave him a continuing claim upon her interest. Henceforth she might be wary of him, but she would never lose touch with him if she could help it.

Now Athenais was pausing beside the table, and saying, with a smile as weary as it was charming:

"Come, Monsieur Paul, if you please, and take me home. I've danced till I'm ready to drop."

Annoyed by the prospect of being obliged to let Lanyard out of her sight before she had time to mature her plans, Liane Delorme pulled herself together.

"Go home?" she protested, with a vivacity so forced it drew a curious stare, even from the empty Le Brun. "So early! My dear, what are you thinking of?"

Cosmopolitan for May, 1921

"I've been on the go all day long," Athenais explained sweetly, "and now I've got nothing left to keep up on."

"Zut!" the Delorme insisted. "Have more champagne and—"

"Thank you, no, dearest. My head is swimming with it already. I really must go. Surely you don't mind?"

But Liane did mind, and the wine she had drunk had left her only a remnant of sobriety, not enough for good control of her temper.

"Mind?" she echoed rudely. "Why should I mind whether you stay or go? It's your affair, not mine." She made a scornful mouth, and the look with which she coupled Lanyard and Athenais in innuendo was in itself almost actionable. "But me," she pursued, with shrill vivacity; "I sha'n't go yet." I'm not drunk enough by half. Get more champagne, Fred"—this to Le Brun, as she turned a gleaming shoulder to the others—"quantities of it—and tell Chu-chu to bring Angèle over, and Constance and Victor, too. Thanks to the good God, they at least know they are still alive!"

XV

ADIEU

EVER since the fall of evening, whose clear gloaming had seemed to promise a fair night of moonlight, the skies had been thickening slowly over Paris. While still at the Ambassadeurs, Lanyard had noticed that the moon was being blotted out. By midnight its paling disk had become totally eclipsed; the clouds hung low over the city, a dense blanket imprisoning the heat, which was oppressive even in the open, stifling in the ill-ventilated restaurants.

Now, from the shelter of the café canopy, Lanyard and Athenais Reneaux looked out upon a *pave* like a river of jet ribboned with gently glowing lights and running between the low banks of sidewalks no less black—both deserted but for a few belated prowlers lurching homeward through the drizzle, and a rank of private cars waiting near the entrance.

Persistent whistles conjured from round a corner a rakish hansom that—like the creature between its shafts and like the driver on its lofty box, with his face in full bloom and his bleary eyes, his double-breasted box-coat and high hat of oil-cloth—had doubtless been brisk with young ambition in the golden time of the Nineteen-naughties.

But unmistakably of the vintage of the Nineteen-twenties was the avarice of the driver. For when he had been given the address of the Athenais's apartment, he announced with vinuous truculence that his whim inclined to precisely the opposite direction, gathered up the reins, clucked in peremptory fashion to the nag (which sagely paid no attention to him whatsoever), and consented only to change his mind when promised a fabulous fare.

Even then he grumbled profanely while Lanyard helped Athenais to climb in and took the place by her side.

The Rue Pigalle was as dark and still as any street in a deserted village. From its gloomy walls the halting clatter of hoofs struck empty echoes that rang in Lanyard's heart like a refrain from some old song. To the very tune had the gay

world gone about its *affaires* in younger years, when the Lone Wolf was a living fact and not a fading memory in the minds of men. He sighed heavily.

"*Monsieur* is sentimental," commented Athenais Reneaux lightly. "Beware! Sentimentalists come always to some sad end."

"One has found that true. But you are young to know it, Athenais."

"A woman is never young—after a certain age—save when she loves, my friend."

"That, too, is true. But still you are over-young to have learned it."

"One learns life's lessons not in any fixed and predetermined order, Paul, with no sort of sequence whatever, but as and when life chooses to teach them."

"*Quel dommage!*" Lanyard murmured, and subsided into another silence.

The girl grew restive.

"But tell me, my dear Don Juan," she protested: "Do all your conquests affect you in this morbid fashion?"

"Conquests?"

"You seemed to get on very well with Liane Delorme."

"*Pardon.* If I am sentimental, it is because old memories have been awakened to-night, memories of forfeit days when one thought well of oneself here in Paris."

"Days in which, no doubt, Liane played a part?"

"A very minor rôle, Athenais—but are you doing me the honor to be jealous?"

"Perhaps, *petit Monsieur Paul.*"

In the broken light of passing lamps, her quiet smile was as illegible as her shadowed eyes.

After a moment, Lanyard laughed a little, caught up her hand, patted it indulgently.

"It isn't fair, my dear, to be putting foolish notions into elderly heads merely because you know you can do it. Show a little respect for my gray hairs."

"They're most becoming," said Athenais Reneaux demurely. "But tell me about Liane, if it isn't a secret."

"Oh, that was so long ago and such a trifling thing, one wonders at remembering it at all. I happened, one night, to be where I had no right to be. That was rather a habit of mine, I'm afraid. And so I discovered, in another man's apartment, a young woman, hardly more than a child, trying to commit suicide. You may believe I put a stop to that. Later, for in those days I had some little influence in certain quarters, I got her a place in the chorus at the Variétés. She made up a name for the stage: Liane Delorme. And that is all. You see, it was very simple."

"And she was grateful?"

"Not oppressively. She was quite normal about it all."

"Still, she has not forgotten."

"But remind yourself that the chemistry of years is such that inevitably a sense of obligation in due course turns into a grudge. It is true Liane has not forgotten, but I am by no means sure she has forgiven me for saving her to life."

"There may be something in that, seeing what she has made of her life."

"Now there is where you can instruct me. I have been long in exile."

"But you know how Liane graduated from the chorus of the Variétés, became, first, a principal there, then the rage of all the music-halls with her way of singing rimed indecencies."

Safeguarding Your Family by Your Will

Men who are prudent give thought to the problem of the financial security of their dependents for the future. And it is not all a problem of getting—it is one of disposing. For the average man the latter is the harder, oftentimes because it is a thing he dislikes to go into, or because he thinks the necessity too remote. But if he is to do that duty which he owes his family, a man must think and learn about wills, and about executors, and about trustees. For in these things the future of his loved ones may be bound up.

What Is a Will?

Property is never without an owner. As has already been pointed out, if a person fails to make valid disposition of his property by will, upon his death the law directs who shall receive it, and in what amounts and proportions. Furthermore,

Safeguarding Your Family's Future

and witnessed by others, stating what disposition of his property shall be made after his death. (In some States witnesses are not required.)

A person making a will should remember the uncertainties of life, that the will may go into effect shortly, and that it may, therefore, be his last opportunity to express his wishes in regard to his property. Viewed in this light, the will is a very important instrument and should be drawn by competent legal authority.

A mere written declaration of one's wishes may not be a will. So called "house made" wills are dangerous, and too often worthless, for many victims of language and law must be considered and the manner of execution and declaration given careful attention.

Can a Will be Changed?

Many persons hesitate to approach the preparation of a will, feeling that it is a

What is a Will?

Can a Will be Changed?

Who Will Carry Out Your Wishes?

WITH the best of intentions for the welfare of their families, many men neglect to consider the future. They forget that women and children, left without the protection of husband and father, are often obliged to endure unnecessary hardships.

There is one best way to provide for the time when you may not be here. That is to make a will.

What is a will? Can it be changed at any time to meet new circumstances? What is an executor and trustee? Can the money and property you leave be surrounded by such safeguards as to protect it against the business in-

experience of those who may receive it? Is there a way to direct the distribution of property and the income from it over a period of years?

The head of a family owes it to those who look to him for protection, to be informed on these questions. They are discussed in a booklet entitled "Safeguarding Your Family's Future," published by the Trust Company Division of the American Bankers Association. Trust companies throughout the country have supplies of the booklet for free distribution. Ask one of these companies or write to the address below for a copy.

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"One has heard something of that."

"On the peak of her success she retired, saying she had worked long enough, made enough money. That, too, knows itself. But Liane retired only from the stage—you understand?"

"Perfectly."

"She continued to make many dear friends, some of them among the greatest personages of Europe. So that, gradually, she became what she is to-day," Athenais Reneaux pronounced soberly, "as I think, the most dangerous woman on the Continent."

"How—'dangerous'?"

"Covetous, grasping, utterly unscrupulous and corrupt, and weirdly powerful. She has a strange influence in the highest places."

"Blackmail?"

"God knows! It was, at all events, strong enough to save her from being shot during the war. I was assigned to watch her then. There was a suspicion in England that she was in communication with the enemy. I found it to be quite true. She knew Bolo Pasha intimately; Caillaux, too. Other women, many of them, fled the country, or went to St. Lazare for the duration of the war, or faced firing-squads at dawn for doing infinitely less than she did to betray France and her allies; but Liane Delorme got off scot-free. I happen to know that England made the strongest representations to the French government about her. I know personally of two young French officers who had been on friendly terms with Liane and who shot themselves, one dramatically, on her very door-step. And why did they do that, if not in remorse for betraying to her secrets which afterward somehow found their way to the enemy? But nothing was ever done about it; she was never in the least molested, and nightly you might see her at Maxim's or L'Abbaye, making love to officers, while at the front men were being slaughtered by the hundreds, thanks to her treachery. Ah, *monsieur*, I tell you I know that woman too well!"

"I think," Lanyard suggested, remembering that conversation in the *grand salon* of the Château de Montalais, "you had better look to yourself, Athenais, as far as Liane is concerned, after to-night. She only needed to see you with me to have confirmed any suspicions she may previously have had concerning your relations with the B. S. S."

"I will remember that," the girl said calmly. "Many thanks, dear friend. But what is it you are doing all the time? What is it you see?"

As the hansom swung round the dark pile of the Trinité, Lanyard had for the third time twisted round in his seat to peep back through the little window in the rear.

"As I thought!" He let the leather flap fall over the peep-hole and sat back. "Liane doesn't trust me," he sighed regretfully.

"We are followed?"

"By a motor-car of some sort, creeping along without lights."

"I have a pistol, if you, need one," Athenais offered.

"Then you were more sensible than I."

Presently the hansom turned off the boulevard, affording Lanyard an opportunity to look back through the side window.

Cosmopolitan for May, 1921

"Still on the trail," he announced. "But they've got the lights on now."

With a profound sigh from the heart, the horse stopped in front of a corner apartment-building and later, with a groan almost human, responded to the whip and jingled the hansom away, leaving Lanyard the poorer by the exorbitant fare he had promised and something more.

Athenais was already at the main entrance, ringing for the *concierge*. Lanyard hastened to join her, but before he could cross the sidewalk, a motor-car poked its nose round the corner of the Boulevard Haussmann, a short block away, and bore swiftly their way, seeming to search the street suspiciously with its blank, lidless eyes of glare.

The latch clicked. Athenais thrust the door open and slipped into dense darkness. Lanyard lingered another instant. The car was slowing down, and the street-lamp on the corner revealed plainly a masculine arm resting on its window-sill; but the spying face above the arm was only a blur.

"Come, *monsieur*!"

Lanyard stepped in and shut the door. A hand with which he was beginning to feel fairly well acquainted found his and led him through the dead obscurity to another pause. A key grated in a lock; the hand drew him on again; a second door closed behind him.

"We are *chez moi*," a voice said in the dark.

"One could do with a light," Lanyard suggested.

"Wait. This way."

The hand guided him across a room of moderate size, avoiding its furniture with almost uncanny ease, then again brought him to a halt. Brass rings clashed softly on a pole; a gap opened in heavy draperies curtaining a window; a shaft of street-light threw the girl's profile into soft relief. She drew him to her till their shoulders touched.

"You see——"

He bent his head close to hers, conscious of a caressing tendril of hair that touched his cheek and the sweet warmth and fragrance of her, and, peering through the draperies, saw their pursuing motor-car at pause, not at the curb but in the middle of the street before the house. The man's arm still rested on the sill of the window; the pale oval of the face above was still vague above it. Abruptly both disappeared; a door slammed on the far side of the car, and the car itself, after a moment's wait, gathered way with whining gears and vanished.

"What did that mean? Did they pick somebody up?"

"But quite otherwise, *mademoiselle*."

"Then what has become of him?"

"In the shadow of the door across the way. Don't you see? And there— Ah, *dolt*!"

The man in the doorway had moved, cautiously thrusting one hand out of the shadow far enough for the street-lights to shine upon the dial of his wrist-watch. Instantly it was withdrawn; but his betrayal was accomplished.

"That's enough," said Lanyard, drawing the draperies close again. "No trouble to make a fool of that one; God has so nobly prepared the soil!"

The girl said nothing. They no longer touched, and she was for the time so still

that he might almost have fancied himself alone. But in that quiet room he could hear her breathing close beside him, not heavily but with a rapid accent, hinting at an agitation which her voice bore out when she answered his wondering,

"Mademoiselle?"

"J'y suis, *petit* Monsieur Paul."

"Is anything the matter?"

"No! No!"

"I'm afraid I have tired you out to-night."

"I do not deny I am a little weary."

"Forgive me."

"There is nothing to forgive; not yet, *petit* Monsieur Paul."

"Three favors more; then I will do you one in return."

"Ask."

"Be so kind as to make a light, and find me a pocket flash-lamp if you have one."

"I can do the latter without the former."

"It is better that we show no light. Wait."

A noise of light footsteps muffled by a rug, high heels tapping on uncovered floor, the scrape of a drawer pulled out; and she returned to give him a little nicked electric torch.

"And then—"

"Liane's address, if you know it."

The girl named a number on an avenue not far distant.

"You can walk there in less than five minutes. And finally?"

"Show me the way out." Again she made no response. He pursued, in some constraint, "Thus you will enable me to make you my only inadequate return—leave you to your rest."

Yet another space of silence; then a gusty little laugh.

"That is a great favor, truly, *petit* Monsieur Paul. So give me your hand once more."

But she no longer clung to it as before; the clasp of her fingers was light, cool, impersonal to the point of indifference. Vexed, resentful of her resentment, Lanyard suffered her guidance through the darkness of another room, a short corridor, and then a third room, where she left him for a moment.

He heard again the clash of curtain-rings. The dim violet rectangle of a window appeared in the darkness, the figure of the woman in vague silhouette against it. A sash was lifted noiselessly; rain-sweet air breathed into the apartment. Athenais returned to his side, pressed into his palm a key.

"That window opens on a court. The drop from the sill is no more than four feet. In the wall immediately opposite you will find a door. This key opens it. Lock the door behind you, and at your first opportunity throw away the key—I have several copies. You will find yourself in a corridor leading to the entrance of the apartment-house in the rear of this, facing on the next street. Demand the *cordon* of the *conciierge* as if you were a late guest leaving one of the apartments. He will make no difficulty about opening. I think that is all."

"Not quite. There remains for me to attempt the impossible, to prove my gratitude, Athenais, is mere unmeaning words."

"Don't try, Paul." The voice was softened once more, its accents broken.

"Words cannot serve us—you and me! There is one way only, and that, I know,



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is—Rue Barré!" Her sad laugh fluttered, she crept into his arms. "But still, *pétit* Monsieur Paul, *she* will not care if—just once!"

"She clung to him for a long, long moment, then released his lips."

"Men have kissed me, yes, not a few," she whispered, resting her face on his bosom, "but you alone have known *my* kiss. Go now, my dear, while I have strength to let you go, and—make me one little promise—"

"Whatever you ask, Athenais."

"Never come back unless you need me; for I shall not have so much strength another time."

Alone, she rested a burning forehead against the lifted window-sash, straining her vision to follow his shadow as it moved through the murk of the court below and lost itself in the deeper gloom of the opposing wall.

XVI

THE HOUSE OF LILITH.

It stood four-square and massive on a corner between the Avenues de Friedland and des Champs-Élysées, near their junction at the Place de l'Étoile—a solid stone pile of a town house in the most modern mode, without architectural beauty, boasting little attempt at exterior embellishment, but smelling aloud of money; just such a *maison de ville* as a decent bourgeois banker might be expected to build him when he contemplates retiring after doing the Rothschilds a wicked one in the eye.

Heavy gates of wrought bronze guarded the front doors. The single side or service-door was similarly protected, if more simply. And stout grilles of bronze barred every window on the level of the street.

Now, none of these could have withstood the attack of a man of ingenuity with a little time at his disposal. But Lanyard could count on only the few remaining minutes of true night. Retarded though it might be by the shrouded skies, dawn must come all too soon for his comfort. Yet he was conscious of no choice in the matter; he must and, in spite of everything, would know to-night what was going on behind that impassive screen of stone. To-morrow night would be too late. To-night, if there were any warrant for his suspicions, the jewels of Eve de Montalais lay in the dwelling of Liane Delorme; or, if they were not there, the secret of their hiding was. But to-morrow both, and more than likely Liane as well, would be on the wing; or Lanyard had been sorely mistaken in seeing in her as badly frightened a woman as he had ever known when she learned of the assassination of de Lorgnes.

He transferred his attention from the formidable defenses of the lower story to the second. Here all the windows were of the type called "French," and opened inward from shallow balconies with wrought-bronze railings. Lanyard was acquainted with every form of fastening used for such windows. All were simple; not one could resist his persuasions, provided he stood upon one of those balconies. Nor did he count it a difficult matter for a man of his activity and strength to scale the front of the house as far as the second story; its walls were built of heavy blocks of dressed stone with deep horizontal channels be-

tween each tier. These grooves would be greasy with rain; otherwise, one could hardly ask for better footholds. A climb of some twelve or fifteen feet to the balcony—one should be able to make that within two minutes, granted freedom from interruption.

Poised to leave his shelter and dart across the street, with his point of attack already selected, his thoughts already busy with consideration of steps to follow, he checked himself and fell still farther back into the shadow. Something was happening in the house across the way.

A man had opened the service-door and paused behind the bronze gate. There was no light behind him, and the gloom and intervening strips of metal rendered his figure indistinct. Lanyard's high-keyed perceptions had none the less been instant to remark that slight movement and the accompanying change in the texture of the darkness barred by the gate.

Following a little wait, it swung slowly out, perhaps eighteen inches, the man advancing with it and again halting to peer up and down the street. Then quickly, as if alarmed, he withdrew, shut the gate, and disappeared, closing the service-door behind him.

Listening intently, Lanyard heard no click of latch, such as should have been audible in that dead hour of hush. Evidently the fellow had neglected to make fast the gate. Possibly he had been similarly remiss about fastening the door. But what was he up to? Why this furtive appearance; why the retreat so abruptly executed?

By way of answer came the soft drone of a high-powered motor; then the car itself rolled into view, a stately limousine coming from the direction of the Avenue de Friedland. Before the corner house it stopped. A lackey alighted with an umbrella and ran to hold the door; but Liane Delorme would not wait for him. The car had not stopped when she threw the door open; on the instant when its wheels ceased to turn, she jumped down and ran toward the house, heedless of the rain.

At the same time, one side of the great front doors swung inward, and a footman ran out to open the gates. The lackey with the umbrella, though he moved briskly, failed to catch up with Liane before she sped up the steps. So he closed the umbrella and trotted back to his place beside the chauffeur. The footman shut gates and door as the limousine moved away; it had not been sixty seconds at rest. In fifteen more, street and house were both as they had been, save that a light now shone through the plate glass of the latter's great doors. And that was soon extinguished.

Conceiving that the man who had appeared at the service-entrance was the same who had admitted Liane, Lanyard told himself he understood—impatient for his bed, the fellow had gone to the service-gate to spy out for signs of *madame's* return. Now, if only it were true that he had failed to close it securely!

It proved so. The gate gave readily to Lanyard's pull. The knob of the small door turned silently. He stepped across the threshold and shut himself into an unlighted hall, thoughtfully aping the negligence of the servant and leaving the door barely on the latch by way of provision against an emergency.

So far, good. He felt for his pocket-torch, then sharply fell back into the nearest corner and made himself as inconspicuous as might be. Footsteps were sounding on the other side of an unseen wall. He waited, breathless, stirless.

A latch rattled, and at about three yards' distance a narrow door opened, marked by a widening glow of light. A liveried footman—beyond a doubt he who admitted the mistress of the house—entered, carrying an electric candle, yawned with a superstitious hand before his mouth, and, looking neither to the right nor to the left, turned away from Lanyard and trudged wearily back to the household offices. At the far end of the long service-hallway, a door closed behind him—and Lanyard moved swiftly.

The door which had let the footman into the hall admitted to a spacious lobby which set apart the entrance and—as the play of the electric torch disclosed—a deep and richly furnished dining-room. To one side a broad flight of stairs ascended. Lanyard went up with the activity of a cat, making no more noise.

The second floor proved to be devoted to a drawing-room, a lounge, and a library, all furnished in a weird, inchoate sort of magnificence—with money rather than with taste, if one might judge fairly by the fitful and guarded beam of the torch.

Lights were burning on the floor above, and a rumor of feminine voices drifted down, interrupted by an occasional sibilant rustle of silk or a brief patter of high-heeled feet—noises which bore out the conjecture that *madame's* maid was undressing and putting her to bed. Lanyard reckoned on anything from fifteen minutes to an hour before her couching would be accomplished and the maid out of the way. Ten minutes more, and Liane ought to be asleep.

Believing he must possess his soul in patience for an indeterminable wait, he was casting about for a place to secrete himself when a change in the tenor of the talk between mistress and maid was conveyed by a sudden lift of half an octave in the latter's voice, sounding a sharp note of protest, to be answered by Liane in accent of overbearing anger.

One simply could not rest without knowing what that meant. Lanyard mounted the second flight of stairs as swiftly, surely, and soundlessly as he had the first. But just below a landing, where the staircase swung at an angle, he paused, crouching low.

"And why should you not go with me to that America if I wish it?" he heard Liane say. "Is it likely I would leave you behind to spread scandal concerning me with that gabbling tongue in your head of an overgrown cabbage? It is some lover, then, who has inspired this folly in you? Tell him from me, if you please, the day you leave my service without my consent, it will be a sorry sweetheart that comes to him."

"It is well, *madame*. I say no more. I will go."

"I believe it well—you will go! You were mad ever to dream otherwise. Fetch my jewel-case—the large one of steel, with the American lock."

"*Madame* takes all her jewels, then?" the maid inquired, moving about the room.

"But naturally. I shall pack them to-night before I sleep."



Norman Rockwell

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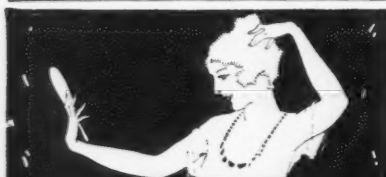
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"Damnation!"—from Lanyard, beneath his breath. "More delay!"

"And we leave to-morrow, *madame*, at what time?"

"It matters not, so we are in Cherbourg by midnight. I may decide to make the trip by automobile."

"And *madame's* packing?"

"You know well what to pack better than I. Get my boxes up the first thing in the morning and use your own judgment. If there are questions to be asked, save them until I wake up. I shall sleep till noon."

"That is all, *madame*?"

"That is all. You may go."

"Good-night, *madame*."

"Good-night, Marthe."

The stairway was no place to stop. Lanyard slipped like a shadow to the floor below.

One must kill time somehow; Liane would be at least another half an hour busy with her jewelry, and the thought presented itself that the library, immediately beneath her room, should be worthy an investigation. In such establishments it is a tradition that the household safe shall be located somewhere in the library, and such strong boxes are apt to be naive contrivances. Lanyard did not hope to find the Montalais jewels stored away in such a place; Liane would surely take better care of them than that. Assuming they were in her possession, they would be under her hand, if not mixed in with her own treasures; still, it could do no harm to make sure.

Confident of being warned at need by his hearing, which was normally super-sensitive and, when he was engaged as now, keyed to preterhuman acuteness, he went coolly about the business, and as his first step found a portable reading-lamp on a long cord, he coolly switched on its hooded light.

The library was furnished with bulky old Italian pieces of carved oak, not especially well selected, but suitably with a single exception—a ponderous buffet, an exquisite bit of workmanship both in design and in detail, but completely out of place in a room of that character. At least nine feet in length, it stood out four from the wall. Three heavy doors guarded by modern locks gave access to the body beneath its tier of drawers.

But—this drew a frowning stare—there was a key in the lock of the middle door.

"There's such a thing as too much luck," Lanyard communed. "First the service-gate and door, and now this, ready to my hand!"

He swung sharply round and searched every shadow in the room with the glare of the portable lamp. But that was work of supererogation; he had already made sure he was alone on that floor of the house.

Placing the lamp on the floor and adjusting its hood so that it focused squarely on the middle section of the buffet, he turned the key and discovered behind the door a small safe.

The run of luck did not hold in respect to this; there was no key, and the combination dial was smug with an ill-grounded confidence in its own inviolable

integrity. Still (Lanyard told it), it could hardly be expected to know it had yet to be dealt with by the shade of the Lone Wolf.

Amused by the conceit, Lanyard laid hold of the knob with steady, delicate finger-tips that ad not yet, in spite of years of honorable idleness, forgotten their cunning. Then he flattened an ear to the cold face of the safe door. To his informed manipulation, the dial whirled, paused, reversed, turned all but imperceptibly, while the hidden mechanism clicked, ground, and thudded softly, speaking a living language to his hearing. In three minutes he sat back on his heels, grasped the T-handle, turned it, had the satisfaction of hearing the bolts slide back into their sockets, and opened the door wide.

But the racked pigeonholes held nothing to interest him whose one aim was the recovery of the Montalais jewels. The safe was, in fact, dedicated simply to the storage of documents.

"Love-letters!" Lanyard mused, with a grimace of weariness. "And each believed, no doubt, she cared too much for him to hold her power to compromise him. Good Lord! What vanity is man's!"

Then the thought presented itself that property of real value might be hidden behind those sheaves of papers. He selected a pigeonhole at hazard, and emptied it of several bundles of letters, all neatly bound with tape or faded ribbon and clearly docketed. It held nothing else whatever. But his eye was caught by a great name endorsed on the face of one of the packages; and reading what else was written there, his brows rose high while his lips shaped a soundless whistle. If an inference were fair, Liane had not kept only such documents as gave her power over others. Lanyard wondered if it were possible he held in his hand an instrument to bend the woman to his will.

Then suddenly he put out a hand and switched off the light, a gesture quite involuntary, simple reaction to the muffled thump of a chair overturned on the floor above.

Sounds of scuffling followed, as if Liane were dancing to no music with a heavy-footed partner. Then a groan—

His hands moved so rapidly and deftly that, although he seemed to rise without a second's delay, the safe was closed and the combination locked, the buffet door closed, and its key in his pocket.

This time, Lanyard ascended the stairs without considering what noise he made. Nevertheless, his actions were never awkward or ill timed. His approach was not heard; his arrival on the upper landing was unnoticed. In an instantaneous pause he looked into the rose-pink room and saw Liane Delorme, in a negligée like a cobweb over a night-dress even more sheer, kneeling and clawing at her throat, round which a heavy silk handkerchief was slowly tightening, her face already purple with strangulation, her eyes bulging from their sockets.

A thick knee was planted between her shoulder-blades. The ends of the handkerchief were in the sinewy hands of Albert Dupont.

Alias the Lone Wolf is one of those mystery stories that do not drop off in interest. With each instalment it goes higher in intensity and pitch. The race of death in next month's *Cosmopolitan* is one of the most exciting chapters imaginable. If you like mystery and thrills—and good writing, too—you will find them here.

She Always Wins

(Continued from page 48)

saying, "that I had an appointment with you. I got here five minutes ago. I came straight on from—"

He got no further. With a nasty little growl, as of a starved dog worrying his meat, Eric Caine was at him.

Saul made no move to defend himself from the rabid onset. Muscles relaxed, he leaned against the mantel, neither flinching nor combative. It is hard to attack a man who waits thus one's homicidal assault. Eric, with his avid fingers curled about his foe's unresisting throat, hesitated, non-plussed. In the bare instant of irresolution, Venner spoke.

"You've got our rôles mixed," he said carelessly. "You're not the avenging and outraged husband. It's the other way round. Now, if you care to throttle me, why, go ahead! But if you want me to save you from the nastiest mess of your whole speckled career, sit down and we'll talk sense. The choice is up to you."

Through the red wrath-mists, Caine recognized the quiet sincerity of his opponent's tone. He saw Venner was not acting. An undercurrent of earnest warning in the calm voice puzzled him. In spite of himself, his hands fell away from the flaccid throat. He stepped back, glaring intently into Saul's level eyes for sign of fear or of trickery. And Venner continued, in the same steady unconcern:

"You can go ahead with your genial plan to murder me and to pillory Hilda if you care to. But do it with your eyes wide open—not like a maniac, not like a mad bull that charges with eyes shut. You'll lose nothing except five minutes of perfectly losable time by listening to me. Then, if you still want to go on with the melodrama, I'll be here. How about it?"

Eric glared suspiciously into the boring, unmoved eyes that met his. Caine's anger was not whipped on by melodrama. It was from the very depths of him. And it clamored for primal physical expression. A single hint of bravado, of flinching, of craftiness from the stolid man in front of him, and the ravening beast in his brain must have torn loose.

But Saul Venner was not acting. There could be no doubt of that, whatever else his cryptic words might imply. Puzzled, irresolute, Eric stepped back. Reluctantly he sat down.

"Go ahead!" he growled, adding ungraciously, "And be brief, please."

"I'm in love with your wife, Caine," Saul announced, with no emotion whatever.

Caine galvanized to action under the cool admission. Half starting to his feet, he clenched his throbbing fists. Venner, waving him back with something of the impatient authority of a teacher rebuking a forward child, said:

"Cut out the stage-business for the time, please, and let's get down to cases. I love your wife—as I've told you. I've been in love with her for three years. And that's all the good it did me."

"By the way," he went on, losing a shade of his imperturbable calm, "you'll not mind if I don't look at you while I talk? Because if you attempt that incredulous eyebrow-raising again, I may forget how much hangs on my keeping

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(Continued from page 11)

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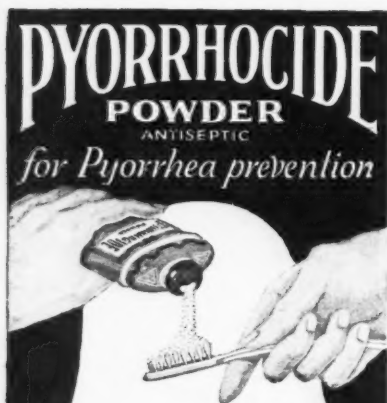
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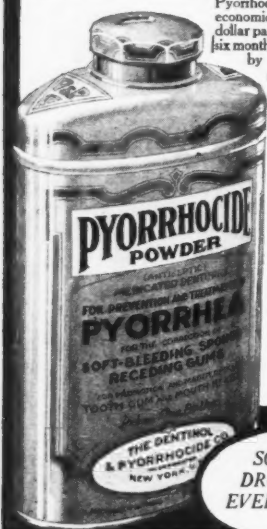
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cool. I love Hilda. I saw she was silly enough to worship you. I saw she was a one-man woman. So I kept my mouth shut. Then, a few months ago, I found out that business—you called it that, anyhow, and it may have been for all I actually know—was making you neglect her. Lord! It was like neglecting a crown jewel to hunt for an extra handful of small change. But I thought it was my chance. I thought so till an hour ago. I was foolish enough to hope even a one-man woman might be cured by neglect, and that then there might be a shred of hope for me. There wasn't. Such women aren't cured. Their hearts are as pitifully easy to smash as a butterfly's wing. But their love can no more be smashed than God's decrees can be smashed. I see that—now it's too late to do me any good.

"To-night, it seemed to me my chance had come. It hadn't. I was a foul-minded idiot. Almost as much so as you are in thinking ill of her. She was piqued at you for leaving her to mope alone at home on the evening of such an anniversary. And she asked me to take your place at the theater, to keep her from thinking too much about your absence. She thought we were going to some ractety cabaret after the show. Even when we got to Madrillo's, her white mind didn't see anything was wrong. Not till— Well, let that go. I felt as if I'd hammered my fist into the laughing face of a baby. I'm not likely to forget it. I was starting to take her home—before we'd been in the supper-room three minutes—when the raid began. Believe that or not as you like. If you choose, you can pretend you think I'm 'lying like a gentleman,' to shield her. To shield her! God! She needs no shielding except from the man she has tied herself to for life.

"I've told you the truth. I've told it for her sake, not for mine. Take it or leave it. Down in your heart of hearts, you know what I've been saying is true."

Caine, despite himself, had listened. And, against all his sophistication and rancor, he felt Saul was speaking the absolute truth. In a daze, he muttered,

"But—but—what—"

"Good!" approved Venner. "You have intelligence enough, after all, to believe me. So much for that end of the tangle. Now for the really important part. You were furious at Hilda when you fancied she had preferred some other man to you. Yet it has never occurred to you that she might have some cause to feel just as furious because you prefer your business to her. You let yourself think she had profaned your love by going to Madrillo's with me. How must she have felt when you profaned her love by slighting this whole wonderful anniversary of hers? To the best type of women there is something mighty sacred about these big anniversaries. When a man kicks them aside for mere business—well, doesn't it strike you he may hurt his wife every bit as much as the thought of a wife's possible unfaith may hurt him? Doesn't it?"

"But I—"

"But you were doing it for your prosperity and for hers, eh? If you were so poor that you needed to earn every cent you could in order to keep her in moderate comfort, I'd have nothing to say to your staying away at work all day and all night. But you aren't. And it's a damn sight

Cosmopolitan for May, 1921

better—and wiser, too—to neglect the office part of your welfare than the home part of it. One man in a million is blest with a wife like yours. Any dub with grubbing brains can build up a business of sorts. But he can't win and hold such a wife as Hilda. Keep on treating her as you've treated her lately, and one day you'll wake up to the fact that you've lost her. Not to any other man. But to your business. Wasn't I right when I said you're in the worst mess of all your career?"

"I—I didn't realize—I still don't really think— You're exaggerating—"

"Am I? Very good. It's no affair of mine. I've warned you. Again for her sake and not for yours. This was to have been a glorious day for her, Caine. She's spent most of it alone, trying to be brave. It has wound up by your breaking her heart and driving her to her room in disgrace. You've left her to spend the night of her eleventh wedding anniversary alone, as she spent the day—only, in a horror of tears and fright, and knowing you mean to punish her for what she never did and never could have done or thought of doing. You're a noble work of nature, Caine! Eleven years ago to-day, you took a pretty solemn oath before the Almighty to 'love and cherish' her. You're doing it finely, aren't you? Not that it's any concern of mine, except that you're merrily flinging away what I'd give my soul to protect and adore. Now, what's the answer?"

Caine arose slowly, dizzily. For an instant he glowered at Venner. Then, all at once, he went to pieces.

"I've—I've been a swine!" he blurted out. "But I don't belong to the breed of swine that gets bogged down in the same mire a second time. I—"

"No," agreed Saul heavily; "I don't believe you do. So good-night. And—good-by, Caine. Your wife wins. The true wife always wins, soon or late. Not that what she wins is usually worth the winning. Tell Hilda you forgive her for not being the Magdalen you thought she was. She'll be tearfully grateful. A woman always is when the man she loves is magnanimous enough to forgive her for something she hasn't done. Good-by."

He unlocked the library door and almost stumbled over a huddled little body crouching on the threshold. Oblivious of him, Hilda sprang up and ran into the room.

"Oh, Eric," Venner heard her wail, "I can't wait till to-morrow! I can't, sweetheart! I can't let you spend the whole night believing I—"

Saul paused to hear no more. As he made his way, unheeded, from the apartment, he had a fleeting glimpse of Eric Caine running forward, babbling incoherent vows of love and of unshakable trust, and catching up his weeping wife in remorsefully adoring arms. Venner shook himself impatiently, and continued his heavy-footed journey to the street.

On the dark sidewalk outside, he paused and stood looking up at the soft-lit library windows above him. Unconsciously he began to speak, half to himself, half-aloud:

"He could have divorced her. And then, perhaps, I— Or—yes; the wife wins! Sometimes the husband wins, too. But the lover—of either sex—simply can't win. No; from the beginning of the world, to the day of Judgment, the lover is the predestined loser."

The Empty Sack

(Continued from page 66)

Jennie gave a great gasp. Her head began to swim. Not villas and limousines rose before her, but cloud-capped towers and gorgeous palaces.

"Poor daddy," she thought, "wouldn't have to hunt for a job any more, and mamma'd have nothing to do for the rest of her life but sit in a chair and rock."

Yet that was only part of the vision. The rest did not go so easily into words. She had only to hurry to the studio, fling herself into the arms she was longing to feel clasped round her—and become fabulously rich.

That would be if Bob took the opening she offered him. If he didn't—

"But suppose Bob won't?" she asked, in terror lest he should not.

"I've thought of that, too," came the prompt answer. "He will, of course. But suppose he didn't. Well, we're not hagglers, my dear. We're only simple people trying to do right, just as you're trying to do right yourself. If Bob is only in a position in which he *can* undo his wrong, whether he undoes it or not, you shall have your twenty-five thousand just the same."

"Could I have it as early as—as next week?"

"If the conditions are fulfilled, certainly."

Jennie was anxious to free herself from the charge of cupidity.

"The reason I say next week is that my father is worried about the interest on the mortgage and the taxes. He didn't pay the interest last time, and the taxes are two months overdue. If he can't find the money by next week—"

"You yourself can be in a position to take all the worry off his hands—once the conditions are fulfilled."

Little more was said after this. There was little more to say. The necessities of the case being once understood, Junia steered her guest back to the car, which waited at the door.

But into the leave-taking Max threw an odd note of hostility. As if he resented some baseness toward his master, he pressed his flank against Jennie with such force as almost to knock her down, and when she sprang away from him into the car, he growled after her.

X

"So you can do it and get away with it."

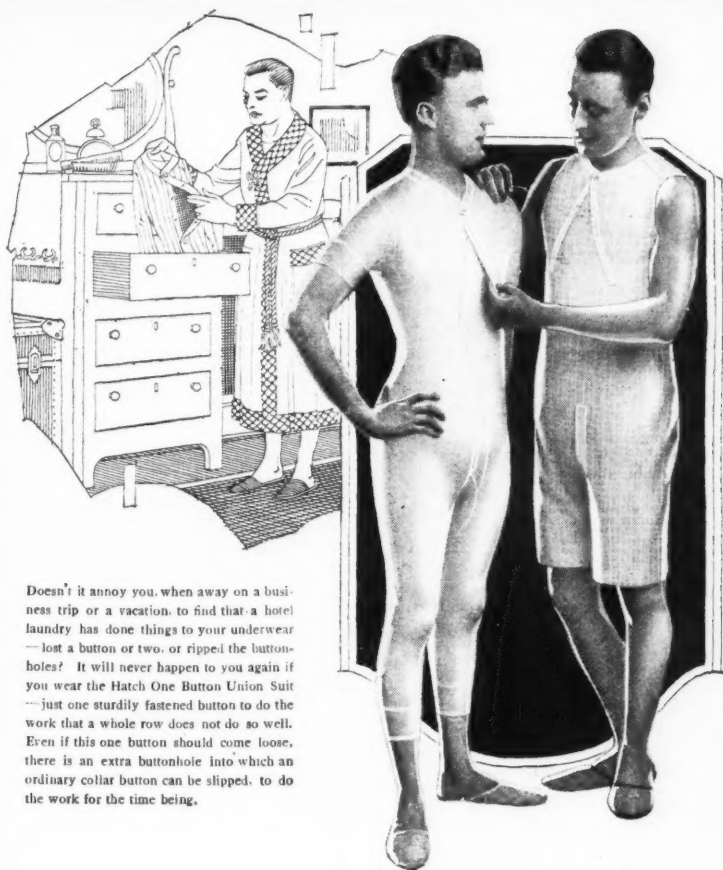
This was Teddy's reflection as he left the bank on that Thursday afternoon. He had spent an infernal day, but it was over, and over safely. Of the missing twenty dollars he had neither heard a word nor caught a sign of anxiety. Mr. Brunt had been methodical and taciturn as usual. Always keeping a gulf between Teddy and himself, it was neither more nor less a gulf to-day than it was on other days. As to whether he missed twenty dollars or whether he did not, Teddy could form no idea.

In the middle of the morning, there had been a terrifying incident.

"See that guy over there?" Lobley, one of his colleagues, had asked him.

He saw the guy over there—a crafty, clean-shaven Celt—and said so.

"That's Flynn, the detective who



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copped Nicholson, the teller at the Wyndham National."

"O my God, I'm pinched!" Teddy exclaimed to himself. "If I had a gun or a dose of poison, he'd never get me alive."

But Flynn only chatted with Jackman, one of the house detectives, laughed, cashed a check at a wicket, and left the bank.

Teddy breathed again, wondering if he had given anything away to Lobley. Was it possible that Lobley could have heard of the twenty dollars and been set to try him out? No; he didn't believe so. Lobley had merely pointed out Flynn as a notable character and gone about his business.

"I shall never forget that mug," Teddy thought, as he summoned his *sang-froid* to go on with his work. "The mug of a guy without guts," he added, further to define the pitiless set of Flynn's features. "I sure would kill myself before I let him touch me."

There was no other alarm that day; there was only the incessant fear, the incessant watchfulness that made him shrink from every eye that glanced his way, and which, when office-hours were over, sent him scuttling to the subway like a rabbit to its hole.

At supper, his father brought up again the subject of the taxes and the interest on the mortgage. The latter would be due at the end of the following week, and the former was long overdue. With the added interest on both, he owed two hundred and sixty-odd dollars, of which he had borrowed a hundred and fifteen from old friends. Between the sum due and that in hand there was a gap which he didn't see how to fill.

"We'll get it somehow, daddy," Jennie said encouragingly. "Don't begin worrying."

"No; Ted'll rob the bank," Gussie laughed flippantly.

Teddy was on his feet, shaking his fist across the table.

"See here, Miss Gus: That's just about—"

Gussie laughed up at him, still more flippantly.

"You haven't robbed it already, have you? Momma, do make him behave."

"Children, don't squabble, please! Teddy darling, Gussie was only poking a little fun. Sit down and have some more hash. It's made with beets in it, just the way you like it. I was reading," she continued, to divert the minds of the company, "of that teller at the Wyndham National—"

"Nicholson," Josiah put in. "I used to know him when I was at the Hudson River Trust. Sharp-eyed little ferret-face he was. Twenty-three thousand, extending over a period of five years. Often had lunch with him at the same counter Blueberry pie was a favorite of his."

"Twenty-three thousand, extending over a period of five years!" Teddy repeated that to himself. He wondered that it hadn't struck him when he heard the fellows at the bank discussing the arrest. One of them had claimed "inside dope" as to how Nicholson had covered up his tracks, and explained the process. Teddy hadn't listened to that, because the magnitude of the theft had excluded its bearing on his own.

But there it was forcing itself on his attention, like Pansy's cold nose pressed

Cosmopolitan for May, 1921

at that minute against his hand. You could have five years' leeway and never be suspected. He pumped his father for further details as to Nicholson's life, learning that he had owned his home at Lefingwell Manor, where he had been a member of the golf club and a churchgoer.

At his own fears, Teddy smiled inwardly. Twenty dollars, which would certainly be paid back in the course of a few weeks! Already he had saved seventy cents toward the restoration just by going without his lunch, with a few economies in car-fares. If he could pawn his best suit of clothes, he would have the whole sum within a fortnight. The suit had been bought for twenty-six dollars, and would certainly bring in ten. It would be a matter of dodging his mother and getting it out of the closet in her room, where she kept it in order to regulate his use of it.

As supper went on, it was little Gladys who brought up the question which some one older might have asked.

"What would happen, daddy, if you couldn't pay the interest and the taxes?"

"They could sell us out of house and home."

But this possibility being more than a week off, the statement brought no fears with it. Like all people who at the best of times are dependent on a weekly wage, the Folletts had the mental attitude best described as "from hand to mouth." That is, once the dinner was secure, there was no will to worry as to where the supper was to come from. It was fundamentally a question of outlook. People used to being provided for naturally looked ahead; but where your most extended view could take you no more than from one meal to another, your powers of forecast grew limited. Doubtless the provision was merciful, for, in the case of the Folletts, even the parents felt the futility of dreading a calamity more than a week away.

Of all the six, Jennie was the only one with a power of making comparisons and drawing contrasts. She had had, that day, a glimpse of a world as different from her own as paradise from earth. It was no use saying that it was different only in degree; it was different also in kind. It was different in values, in textures, in amplitudes. It was another thing, not another aspect of the same thing. Junia Collingham might be a human being like herself; but in all that was of practical account, she was as widely separated from Jennie Follett as a New Yorker from a Central African.

Along the line of these musings, Teddy said suddenly:

"Saw young Coll to-day. Came up and spoke to me. Not half a bad sort when you get to know him."

Jennie felt a little faint, but no one noticed it, because Gussie threw back the ball.

"Tell him to come up and speak to me. Any afternoon at half-past five, when I leave Corinne's."

"Say, Gus," Gladys giggled; "wouldn't you like a guy with all that wad waitin' for you every day when Corinne shuts down the lid? My! The ice-cream sodas he could blow you to!"

Lizzie was pained. It seemed to her that the process of Americanization which her children were undergoing lay chiefly in the degradation of their speech.

"Gladys darling, can't you find proper words to—"

"Oh, mamma dear," Gladys complained, "do put a can on all that! If you're a cash-girl, you've got to talk English, or the other girls'll whizzy you round the lot."

"Young Coll is going to South America," Teddy informed the party. "Sails with Huntley on Monday. Gosh! Wouldn't I like to be going, too! Say, dad, why do some fellows come into the world with the way all smoothed for them and their bread buttered in advance?"

"Because," Gussie declared loftily, "they're clever and can get ahead, like Fred Inglis. I'll bet that if his father wanted his taxes and the interest on a mortgage, he wouldn't have to raise the wind among his old friends. Fred'd be Johnny-on-the-spot with the greenbacks."

Teddy could only gulp, hang his head over his plate, and choke himself with hash, as he muttered to his soul: "God! I'll shoot that Fred Inglis if I ever get a gun."

And just as if she knew that Teddy needed comforting, Pansy sprang upon his knees, pushing her face up along his breast till she could lick his chin.

Twenty-four hours later, Max was vexing his soul with the difficulty of transcending planes. There was so much of which he could have warned his master, now that he had got him back from Long Island; but there was neither speech nor language, neither symbol nor sign to make human beings understand anything but the most primitive needs and concepts. Obedience! Disobedience! Hunger! Thirst! Sorrow! Joy! These sentiments could be put over from the dog plane to the human plane, but without shadings, subtleties, or any of the marvels of intuitive knowledge by which dogs could enlighten men if men had open faculties. To another dog, he could have flashed his information in an instant; whereas human beings could only seize ideas when they were beaten into them with verbal clubs.

Edith and Bob voted Max a nuisance, because, in his agony of impotence, he pranced restlessly about the bedroom, lashing his tail in one tempo and pointing his ears in another. Edith had come down from the Berkshires on hearing by wire that Bob was to leave next Monday for South America. She was seated now on his bed, her back against the foot-board.

"What I don't quite see," she was saying, "is how you can be so sure."

Bob looked at her as he stood taking the studs from the soft-bosomed evening shirt in his hand to transfer them to the clean one lying on the bed.

"How can you be so sure about Ayling?"

"Well, that's a little different. Ernest speaks our language; he has our ways. Dad and mother make a fuss because he hasn't a lot of money; but that means no more than if he didn't wear a certain kind of hat. He's our sort just the same."

"And I'm her sort. I can't explain it to you, Edie, but she needs me."

"How do you know she needs you? Has she ever admitted it?"

"I haven't asked her to admit it. I can see."

"Yes; that's all very fine—but did it ever strike you, when Hubert's been talking about her, that—"

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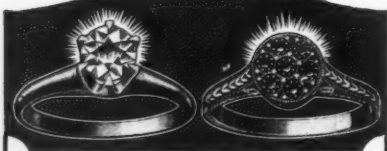
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Bob made an inarticulate sound of scorn as he inserted the cuff-links into a cuff.

"Oh, Hubert's a top-hole chap, all right; but—my Lord!—Jennie wouldn't look across the street at him."

"But he might look across the street at Jennie; and with you so far away—"

He smiled, with something like a wink. "Don't you fret about that. She's the kind of little woman to be true. You can't mistake 'em."

"We've known a good many men who have mistaken them."

"You haven't known my kind to make that sort of tumble. Love can be blind; but instinct can't be. Edie, I believe so much in that girl that, if she was to play me false— But there—good Lord!—she couldn't. So why talk about it any more? See here," he added: "If you're going to change your dress, you'll have to scuttle—and I must get into my waiter's togs."

Meanwhile, Dauphin's struggles were of another order. It was the hour of the day which he was accustomed to spend with Collingham, and to spend it undisturbed. In this lovely spring weather they strolled about the gardens, peeped into the hotbeds, dropped in aimlessly at the stable or the garage, exchanged odds and ends of observation with the men working round the place. After this, they returned to the house, where, up-stairs, in a comfortably masculine bedroom, the man made changes in his outer fur, while the setter, less concerned about trifles, stretched himself out on the floor and blinked. It was a restful time, suited to a mind which, after the stormier years, was growing more and more content with material prosperity, and to a heart that was always content with its master's contentment.

But, of late, poor Dauphin had been painfully buffeted by waves of agitation. They emanated from his master, like circle-lets round a stone thrown into a pool. When his master's wife came into the scene, the conflict of forces was terrible. She was not straight with her lord. She was using him, hoodwinking him. Dauphin would have sprung at her throat had it not been for the knowledge that, were he to do so, he would be beaten and kicked by the object of his defense. No; you couldn't deal with human beings sensibly. The wise thing to do was to stretch on the floor and pretend to snooze while they fought their own fight.

They didn't precisely fight their own fight just now. Collingham merely accepted terms. He was picking up his evening jacket from the bed on which his valet had laid it out. Junia, dressed exactly to the mean between too little and too much suited for a family dinner, had crossed the threshold of his room, where she stood adjusting a fall of lace.

"As I told you yesterday after she went away, she's just what you'd expect from such a girl, certainly no better and possibly a little worse. She's a mousey little thing, with a veneer of modesty; but 'mercenary' isn't the word. It's just a question of money, Bradley; and if you'll leave it to me to deal with—"

"Leave it to you to deal with—to the tune of twenty-five thousand dollars," he said morosely, pulling his coat into shape round his shoulders as he looked into the long glass.

"Well, that's only half what it might

have been. I thought at one time that we might have to make it fifty thousand—"

He was not sure, but he thought she finished with the word "again." If so, it was uttered too softly for him to be obliged to take note of it, so that he merely picked up a hair-brush and put another touch to his hair.

She was now at work on the great string of pearls which, to keep them alive, she wore even in domestic privacy. Her object was to get the famous Roehampton pearl, from the late Lady Roehampton's collection, which had been the seal of her reconciliation with Bradley fifteen years earlier—to get this jewel right in the center of her person, to make the string symmetric.

"My point in bringing it up now," she said, speaking into her chin as her eyes inspected the long oval of the necklet, "is to remind you that you don't know anything. You haven't seen Bob for nearly a week, and after Monday you won't see him for two or three months at least. Don't let him suspect that you've anything on your mind. As a matter of fact, you haven't, except what I tell you—and I may not tell you everything."

"And that may be what I complain of."

"You can't complain of it when I give you the results—now, can you? You don't complain of Mr. Bickley, or ask him for all the reasons he has for saying this or that. You leave him a free hand, and are ruled by him—you've often said it—even when your own preference would be to do something else, as it was in the case of this man, Follett. Now, I only claim to be the Mr. Bickley of the family."

That he had rights as father, Collingham was aware, though he was shy of putting them forward. Having left them so much in abeyance, it would have been as ridiculous to emphasize them now as to dispute Bickley as efficiency expert at the bank. Moreover, the uneasiness which seized on a man when his chickens come home to roost inclined him still further to passivity. If Bob was "knocking about town," as he seemed to be, he might know about his father what Junia did not—or presumably did not—that the woman who received the fifty thousand dollars had had her successors, and that even now the line was not extinct. While he knew of amusing incidents of fathers and sons meeting on this ground, any such *contretemps* in his own case would have shocked him profoundly. Junia might go beyond her powers in prescribing his course, and yet, for a multitude of reasons too subtle for him to phrase, it seemed wise to follow what Junia prescribed.

So the family dined and spent the evening together as tourists walk across the Solfatara crater. The ground was hot beneath their tread, and here and there a whiff of sulphuric vapor poured through a fissure in the crust; but only Max and Dauphin sensed the volcanic fire.

Later in the evening, Junia knelt at her *pride-dieu* with the armorial books of devotion.

"And, O heavenly Father," she added to her usual prayer, "have mercy upon that poor erring girl and help her to repent. Grant that my son may extricate himself from the toils in which he is entangled. Enable my daughter to see that her duty lies in the station of life to which Thou hast been pleased to call her. Give my husband

the wisdom to seek advice and to follow it. Lead me with Thy counsel, so that I may do what is best for all my dear ones, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen."

Having thus poured out her heart, she rose, feeling stronger and more comforted.

XI

It should be said for Jennie Follett that, in the matter of her course toward Bob Collingham, she had few of those convictions of sin and righteousness which restrain a proportion of mankind. As with the other members of her family, her conduct followed certain lines "because she couldn't help it." That is as far as her analysis would have carried her, though analysis didn't give her much concern. Having so much to do to get food and clothes, the higher laws were outside her sphere of interest. Her chief law was Necessity, and it covered so much ground that there was little place for any other law.

It may be well to state here that the Folletts belonged to that vast American contingent who have practically no religion. They had had a religion in Canada, where they had attended the church of a local god who seemed to hold no sway over the United States. They never found that church in the suburbs of New York, or, if they found it nominally, it didn't, in their opinion, "seem the same." There were no local suasions and compulsions to bring them to its doors, and so, after a few spasmodic efforts to reestablish the connection, they gave up the attempt.

Perhaps this failure was due to the fact that, in the depths of her strong, proud heart, Lizzie didn't believe in God. Josiah did—or, at least, he had believed in him up to the time of being thrown upon the scrap-heap. But Lizzie's faith in God had died with the dying of her faith in man. She had never said so, because she kept her deeper thoughts to herself; but along these lines her influence on her children had been negative.

Jennie went to her farewell meeting with Bob untroubled by qualms of conscience. Even if scruples had worried her, they would have been allayed by the knowledge, imparted by Bob's own mother, that he had done her a great injury. He made the same kind of love to every girl he had known for an hour, and forgot her the next day. "One of these days," the mother had said, "some girl would catch him, and then he would be sorry." A girl hadn't caught him in this case, but he had caught a girl, and didn't know what to do with her. Having compelled her to go through a form of marriage—it was no more than a form—he was sailing off to the ends of the world, leaving her not so much as the protection of his name. She owed him nothing; and only the goodness of his angel mother was making up for what he owed to her.

And, on his side, Bob was so carried away by his romance as to have no conception of Jennie's attitude toward him. Seeing himself as a knight riding to the relief of a damsel in distress, it did not occur to him that the damsel could have a preference as to her deliverer. It was a matter of course that, from the window of the tower in which she was a prisoner, she would drop into his arms.

In other words, Bob had his own view

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of the advantages of being a Collingham. They were great advantages, since they gave him the opportunity of being generous. He was in love with Jennie largely because she was an exquisite object on which to spend himself. She was a gem, not in the rough, and yet in need of polishing, and though his own refinement was not so very great, he could throw refinement in her way.

That is to say, love for Bob was very much a matter of giving himself out. Girls who could have brought him everything—and they were not scarce at Mar-rillo Park—didn't interest him. They left no place for the selflessness which was the basis of his character. He couldn't precisely be called kind, since kindness implies some deliberation of the will. As the impulse of a fountain is to pour itself out, so Bob's impulse was to give, while Jennie was a crystal chalice wide open to receive.

"I want you to have everything in the world, Jennie darling," he declared, bending above her as lovingly as a bench in the park would permit. "I can't give it to you right off the bat—worse luck!—but sooner or later I'll be able to dope you out every little wish. Good Lord! How I'll enjoy it."

"What do you mean by 'sooner or later'?" Jennie asked, with eyes downcast.

"When I get the family broken to the bit. I can't tell you in dates or time. They'll be hard in the mouth at first; and mother pulls like the devil."

At this false witness, Jennie was revolted. No one knew better than herself the bigness of that maternal heart which, as early as next week, would give liberal proof of its sincerity when Bob's promises would still be in the air.

Bob had the afternoon at his disposal. The park offered itself as a delicious trusting-place, because it was the month of May. In a nook where lilac and syringa overshadowed them and water glinted between lawns and glades, they sat discreetly side by side, and she permitted him to hold her hand.

He went on to sketch his plans for the immediate future. His most trying lack was that of ready cash. The parental system had always been generous as to things but penurious in money. In the matter of things, he could be as extravagant as he reasonably liked, so long as the bills were sent to dad. Before he went to work at the bank, his allowance in money wouldn't have kept him in cigarettes. Even now, he was only on the weekly pay-roll for thirty-eight dollars and sixty-six cents per, handed him in a pay-envelope. Food, lodging, clothes, saddle-horses, motor-cars—all these were thrown in extra; but in actual coin he didn't handle more than his two thousand dollars a year, like any other clerk.

Jennie could see, therefore, that, to begin with, their position would be difficult, though only to begin with. He could send her a little money while he was away, but it wouldn't be very much.

"I don't want you to send me any," she said hastily.

"You forget that I'm your husband, dear. If I didn't, you could bring an ac-

tion for divorce on the ground of non-support."

This idea being new to Jennie, she had it explained to her, rejecting it as a resource, because it was unromantic.

"And so, to be on the safe side against that," he laughed, "I've got this for you now."

Slipping an envelop from his pocket, he forced it into the hand he was holding.

"It's only a hundred dollars—" he was beginning to explain.

She snatched her hand away as if she had been stung.

"Oh, Bob, I can't!"

That situation amused him. It was one more proof of the naive honesty of the little girl. He knew how hard up she was, how hard up all the family must be, and yet money didn't tempt her.

"You're a funny little kid," he laughed, drawing her as near to him as the park laws would permit. "You'd think I didn't have a right to take care of you."

But Jennie was feeling that if she took this money she would be bound to him by principles more acute than the promises she had made before the parson.

"No, Bob; I can't. Please don't make me—please!"

But in the end he forced it on her, and she stowed it away in her little bag. By that time, too, she had reviewed the family situation. With a hundred dollars in her possession, they could less easily be sold out of house and home at the end of the following week. That calamity, at least, could be dodged, whatever other misfortune might overtake herself. She might decide that to be sold out of house and home would be easier than to bind herself further to Bob by using his money; but, still, she would have the choice. As to the twenty-five thousand, there was always the possibility that it might not come in time. She had not yet seen Hubert; she couldn't see him till Bob had sailed. When she did, the other woman might be in her place, and her heart would have to break in spite of everything. Better that it should break with a hundred dollars in her pocket than that she should be helpless to stay the family disaster.

But when Bob sailed on the Monday, she was free to make the great test. Notwithstanding his definite farewells on the Saturday, he had tried to see her again on the Sunday, but the necessity for secrecy made it possible for her to put him off. For one thing, she couldn't go through a second time such a good-by as that of Saturday. Bob had been too much overcome. As unexpectedly to himself as to her, he had broken down. Braving all publicity, he had suddenly seized her hand, pressed it to his lips, and, as he bent over it, she could feel his tears against her fingers. He hadn't exactly cried; he had only breathed hard, with two great sobs.

"My God, how I love you, Jennie!" she had heard him muttering. "How I love you! How I love you! How can I do without you all the time till I come back?" When he raised his head, he laughed sheepishly, though the tears were still on his cheeks. "Forget it, little girl," he begged unsteadily, wiping his

cheeks and blowing his nose. "I just worship you, and that's all there is about it. It breaks me all up to go away and leave you; but the time will pass, and, if I can help it, I shall never go away from you again."

Defying the park laws once more, he had kissed her and kissed her. She had let him do it because she was so unnerved. Besides, she was sorry for him, and would have been sorrier still if she hadn't known that by to-morrow he would have forgotten her. That was always the way with fellows who took things so hard. The true love was too stern and strong to show emotion.

Nevertheless, she had had an unhappy Sunday thinking of those two sobs. It was not until after ten o'clock on Monday morning that she was able to turn again to the compulsion of the man she loved. At ten, Bob sailed, and that episode in Jennie's life was probably behind her. By the time he came back, he would be in love with a girl of his own class and eager to seize the freedom she, Jennie, would be in a position to deliver him. At last the way was clear. She had only to go to her lover and tell him she was there.

She went that afternoon. Her plan was simple. She would say that if he had not yet found a model for the girl in the Byzantine chair, she was ready to do the work. The rest would come as a matter of course.

Now that she was face to face with the task, her heart was oddly apathetic. "I might be out to buy postage-stamps," she said to herself while crossing the ferry.

At the door of the studio-building, she was seized with a great terror. She began to understand what it was she had come to do. She had come to give herself up. She was to say, in fact, "Here I am—take me." And he would take her—if he hadn't already taken some one else. The betrayal of a husband who was hardly a husband was no longer in her mind. She was appalled at this yielding of herself.

Yet she did everything as she had been accustomed to do it, and entered the studio by the door she generally used.

At first, she thought there was no one there. Certainly the other woman was not, and that was so far a relief. Slowly, cautiously, she made her way between the brocades, old furniture, and pedestals. Then she saw Hubert, and Hubert saw her.

She stood very much as a deer stands when surprised in the bracken—head erect, eyes curious. Till he gave her a sign, she made no movement to go farther. And for a minute he gave her no sign. He only remained seated and looked. He looked, with a sketch and pencil in his hand. He had been occupied in touching something up.

But she couldn't mistake it. It was the girl in the Byzantine chair! Her heart, which seemed to swell to thrice its size, thumped painfully.

Then, at last, a smile broke over his face, lifting his mustache and mounting to his violet eyes. He didn't speak; he didn't move. He only looked, hushed, enraptured, as the hunter at the startled deer.

If, (as has been so often claimed), the greatest literature is that which best reflects the life of the period in which it is written, *The Empty Sack* will go down in history as one of the truly great novels of all times. For in it the author has drawn a graphic picture of America as it is to-day—and drawn it with an increasing intensity as compelling as it is dramatic. Do not miss the next instalment—in *June Cosmopolitan*.

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The Keyless Watch

Caron's gift to Pompadour was a tiny affair. "It is in a ring," he wrote, "only four lignes [one-third inch] in diameter. I have contrived a circle around the dial, with a little projecting hook. Carrying this with the finger nail two-thirds around the dial, rewinds the watch. It runs for thirty hours"

TWIST this hook around the dial," murmured an audacious courtier to Madame Pompadour in 1752, "as you twist our empire 'round your finger!"

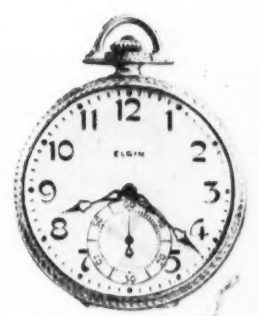
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The Pride of Palomar

(Continued from page 36)

contracted. Up the side of El Palomar peak, something that resembled a great black snake had been stretched, and Farrel nodded approvingly as he observed it.

"Good idea, that, to lay a half-mile of twelve-inch steel pipe up to that limestone deposit," he remarked to Parker, who had reined his horse beside Don Mike's. "Only way to run your crushed rock down to the concrete mixer at the dam-site. You'll save a heap of money on delivering the rock, at any rate. Who's your contractor, Mr. Parker?"

"A man named Conway."

"Old Bill Conway, of Santa Barbara?"

"The same, I believe," Parker replied, without interest.

"Great old chap, Bill! One of my father's best friends, although he was twenty years younger than dad. He must feel at home on the Rancho Palomar."

Mrs. Parker could not refrain from asking why.

"Well, ever since Bill Conway was big enough to throw a leg over a horse and hold a gun to his shoulder, he's been shooting deer and quail and coursing coyotes on this ranch. Whenever he felt the down-hill drag, he invited himself up to visit us. Hello! Why, I believe the old horse-thief is down there now; at least that's his automobile. I'd know that ruin anywhere. He bought it in 1906, and swears he's going to wear it out if it takes a lifetime. Let's go down and see what they're up to there. Come on, folks!" And, without waiting to see whether or not he was followed, he urged the pinto over the crest and rode down the hillside at top speed, whooping like a wild Indian to attract the attention of Bill Conway. In a shower of weeds and gravel the pinto slid on his hind quarters down over the cut-bank where the grading operations had bitten into the hillside, and landed with a grunt among the teams and scrapers.

"Bill Conway! Front and center!" yelled the master of Palomar.

"Here! What's the row?" a man shouted, and from a temporary shack office a hundred yards away, a man stepped out.

"What do you mean by cutting into my dam-site without my permission?" Farrel yelled and drove straight at the contractor. "Hey, there, old settler! Mike Farrel, alive and kicking!" He left the saddle while the pinto was still at a gallop, landed on his feet in front of Bill Conway and took that astounded old disciple of dump-wagon and scraper in a bearlike embrace.

"Miguel! You young scoundrel!" Conway yelled, and forthwith he beat Farrel between the shoulder-blades with a horny old fist and cursed him lovingly.

"Cut out the profanity, Mr. Conway," Don Mike warned him. "Some ladies are about due on the job."

"When'd you light in the Palomar, boy? Gimme your hand. What the—say, ain't it a pity the old man couldn't have lasted until you got back? Ain't it, now, son?"

"A very great pity, Mr. Conway. I got home last night."

"Boy, I'm glad to see you. Say, you ran into surprises, didn't you?" he added, lowering his voice confidentially.

"Rather. But, then, so did the other fellow. In fact, sir, a very pleasant time was had by all. By the way, I hope you're not deluding yourself with the belief that I'm going to pay you for building this dam."

"By Judas priest," the alert old contractor roared, "you certainly do file a bill of complications! I'll have to see Parker about this right away—why, here he is now."

The Parkers had followed more decorously than had Farrel; nevertheless, they had arrived in more or less of a hurry. John Parker rode directly to Conway and Farrel.

"Well, Mr. Conway," he shouted pleasantly, "the lost sheep is found again."

"Whereat there is more rejoicing in San Marcos County than there will be over the return of some other sheep—and a few goats—I know of. How do you do, Mr. Parker?" Conway extended his hand, and, as Kay and her mother rode up, Farrel begged their permission to present him to them. Followed the usual commonplaces of introduction, which Farrel presently interrupted.

"Well, you confounded old ditch-digger! How about you?"

"Still making little rocks out of big ones, son. Say, Mr. Parker, how do we stack up on this contract, now that Little Boy Blue is back on the Palomar, blowing his horn."

Parker strove gallantly to work up a cheerful grin.

"Oh, he's put a handful of emery dust in my bearings, confound him, Mr. Conway! It begins to look as if I had leaped before looking."

"Very reprehensible habit, Mr. Parker. Well—I'm getting so old and worthless nowadays that I make it a point to look before I leap. Mike, my son, do you happen to be underwriting this contract?"

Don Mike looked serious. He pursed his lips, arched his brows, drew some bills and small coins from his pocket, and carefully counted them.

"The liquid assets of the present owner of that dirt you're making so free with, Mr. Conway, total exactly sixty-seven dollars and nine cents. And I never thought the day would come when a pair of old-time Californians like us would stoop to counting copper pennies. Before I joined the army, I used to give them away to the cholo children, and when there were no youngsters handy to give the pennies to, I used to throw them away."

"Yes," Bill Conway murmured sadly.

"And I remember the roar that went up from the old-timers five years ago when the Palace Hotel in San Francisco reduced the price of three fingers of straight whisky from twenty-five cents to fifteen. Boy, they're crowding us out."

"Who's been doing most of the crowding in San Marcos County while I've been away, Mr. Conway?" Farrel queried innocently.

"Japs, my son. Say, they're comin' in here by the ship-load."

"You don't tell me! Why, two years ago there wasn't a Jap in San Marcos County with the exception of a couple of shoemakers and a window-washing outfit in El Toro."

"Well, those hombres aren't mending shoes or washing windows any more, Miguel. They saved their money and now they're farming—garden-truck mostly. There must be a thousand Japanese in the county now—all farmers or farm-laborers. They're leasing and buying every acre of fertile land they can get hold of."

"Have they acquired much acreage?"

"Saw a piece in the El Toro *Sentinel* last week to the effect that nine thousand and twenty acres have been alienated to the Japs up to the first of the year. Nearly all the white men have left La Questa valley since the Japs discovered they could raise wonderful winter celery there."

"But where do these Japanese farmers come from, Mr. Conway?" Parker inquired. "They do not come from Japan because, under the gentlemen's agreement, Japan restricts immigration of her coolie classes."

"Well, now," Bill Conway began judicially. "I'll give Japan the benefit of any doubts I have as to the sincerity with which she enforces this gentlemen's agreement. The fact remains, however, that she does not restrict immigration to Mexico, and, unfortunately, we have an international boundary a couple of thousand miles long and stretching through a sparsely settled, brushy country. To guard our southern boundary in such an efficient manner that no Jap could possibly secure illegal entry to the United States via the line, we would have to have sentries scattered at hundred-yard intervals and closer than that on dark nights. The entire standing army of the United States would be required for the job. In addition to the handicap of this unprotected boundary, we have a fifteen-hundred-mile coastline absolutely unguarded. Japanese fishermen bring their nationals up from the Mexican coast in their trawlers and set them ashore on the southern California coast. At certain times of the year, any landlubber can land through the surf at low tide; in fact, ownerless skiffs are picked up on the south-coast beaches right regularly."

"Well, you can't blame the poor devils for wanting to come to this wonderful country, Mr. Conway. It holds for them opportunities far greater than in their own land."

"True, Mr. Parker. But their gain is our loss, and, as a matter of common sense, I fail to see why we should accord equal opportunity to an unwelcome visitor who enters our country secretly and illegally. I grant you it would prove too expensive and annoying to make a firm effort to stop this illegal immigration by preventive measures along our international boundary and coast-line, but if we destroy the Jap's opportunity for profit at our expense, we will eliminate the main incentive for his secret and illegal entry,



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which entry is always very expensive. I believe seven hundred and fifty dollars is the market-price for smuggling Japs and Chinamen into the United States of America."

"But we should take steps to discover these immigrants after they succeed in making entry—"

"Rats!" the bluff old contractor interrupted. "How are we going to do that under present conditions? The cry of the country is for economy in governmental affairs, so Congress prunes the already woefully inadequate appropriation for the Department of Labor and keeps our force of immigration inspectors down to the absolute minimum. These inspectors are always on the job; the few we have are splendid, loyal servants of the government, and they prove it by catching Japs, Chinamen, and Hindus every day in the week. But for every illegal entrant they apprehend, ten escape and are never rounded up. Confound them; they all look alike, anyhow! How are you going to distinguish one Jap from another?"

"Furthermore, Mr. Parker, you must bear this fact in mind: The country at large is not interested in the problem of Oriental immigration. It hasn't thought about it; it doesn't know anything about it except what the Japs have told it, and a Jap is the greatest natural-born liar and purveyor of half-truths and sugar-coated misinformation this world has known."

"Easy, old timer!" Don Mike soothed, laying his hand on Conway's shoulder. "Don't let your angry passions rise."

Conway grinned.

"I always fly into a rage when I get talking about Japs," he explained deprecatingly to the ladies. "And it's such a helpless, hopeless rage. There's no outlet for it. You see," he began all over again, "the dratted Jap propagandist is so smart—he's so cunning that he has capitalized the fact that California was the first state to protest against the Japanese invasion. He has made the entire country believe that this is a dirty little local squabble of no consequence to our country at large. He keeps the attention of forty-seven states on California while he quietly proceeds to colonize Oregon, Washington, and parts of Utah. Lately he has passed blithely over the hot, lava-strewn, and fairly non-irrigated state of Arizona to the more fertile agricultural lands of Texas. And yet a couple of hundred prize boobs in Congress talk sagely about an amicable settlement of the Jap problem in California! When they want information, they consult the Japanese ambassador!"

"But why," Kay ventured to ask, "do the Japanese not acquire agricultural lands in the Middle West. There are no restrictions in those states in the matter of outright purchases of land, and surely the soil is fertile enough to suit the most exacting Jap."

"Ah, young lady," Bill Conway boomed. "I'm glad you asked me that question. The Jap is a product of the temperate zone; he does not take kindly to extremes of heat and cold. Unlike the white man he cannot stand such extremes and function with efficiency. That's why the extreme northern part of Japan, which is very cold in winter, is so sparsely popu-

Cosmopolitan for May, 1921

lated, although excellent agricultural land. Why freeze to death up there when, by merely following the Japan Current as it leaves the west coast of North America from British Columbia down, one can, in a pinch, dispense with an overcoat in January."

"Enough of this anti-Japanese propaganda of yours, Señor Conway," Don Mike interrupted. "Our friends here haven't listened to anything else since I got home last night. Mr. Parker, being quite ignorant of the real issue, has, of course, fallen under the popular delusion; and I've been trying my best to lead him to the mourner's bench, to convince him that when he acquires the Rancho Palomar—which, by the way, will not be for at least a year, now that I've turned up to nullify his judgment of foreclosure—that it will be a far more patriotic action on his part, even if less profitable, to colonize the San Gregorio with white men instead of Japs. In fact, Mr. Parker, I wouldn't be surprised if you should succeed in putting through a very profitable deal with the state of California to colonize the valley with ex-soldiers."

Old Bill Conway turned upon John Parker a smoldering gaze.

"So I'm building a dam to irrigate a lot of Jap truck-gardens, am I?" he rumbled.

The sly, ingenious manner in which Miguel Farrel had so innocently contrived to strew his already rough path with greater obstacles, infuriated Parker, and for an instant he lost control of himself.

"What do you care what it's for, Conway, provided you make your profit out of the contract?" he demanded brusquely.

"Ladies," the contractor replied, turning to Mrs. Parker and Kay, "I trust you will pardon me for discussing business in your presence just for a minute. Miguel, am I to understand that this ranch is still Farrel property?"

"You bet! And for a year to come."

"Then I gather that Mr. Parker has contracted with me to build a dam on your land and without your approval. Am I right?"

"You are, Mr. Conway. I am not even contemplating giving my approval to the removal of another scraper of dirt from that excavation."

Conway faced Parker.

"Am I to continue operations?" he demanded. "I have a cost-plus-fifteen-per-cent. contract with you, Mr. Parker and if you are not going to be in position to go through with it, I want to know it now."

"In the absence of Mr. Farrel's permission, I have no alternative save to ask you to suspend operations, Mr. Conway," Parker answered bitterly. "I expect, of course, to settle with you for the abrupt cancellation of the contract, but I believe we [are both reasonable men and that no difficulty will arise in that direction."

"I'm naturally disappointed, Mr. Parker. I have a good crew and I like to keep the men busy—particularly when good men are as hard to procure as they are nowadays. However, I realize your predicament, and I never was a great hand to hit a man when he was down."

"Thank you, Mr. Conway. If you will drop in at the ranch-house to-morrow for dinner, we can put you up for the night, I dare say." He glanced at Farrel, who nodded. "We can then take up the matter of compensation for the cancelled contract."

"In the mean time, then, I might as well call the job off and stop the expense," Conway suggested. "We'll load up the equipment and pull out in the morning."

"Why be so precipitate, Mr. Conway?" Don Mike objected, almost fiercely. "You always were the most easy-going, tender-hearted old scout imaginable, and that's why you've never been able to afford a new automobile. Now, I have a proposition to submit to you, Mr. Conway, and inasmuch as it conflicts radically with Mr. Parker's interests, I feel that common courtesy to him indicates that I should voice that proposition in his presence. With the greatest good will in life toward each other, nevertheless we are implacable opponents. Mr. Parker has graciously spread, face up on the table for my inspection, an extremely hard hand to beat; so now it's quite in order for me to spring my little joker and try to take the odd trick. Mr. Conway, I want you to do something for me. Not for my sake or the sake of my dead father, who was a good friend of yours, but for the sake of this state where we were both born and which we love because it is symbolical of the United States. I want you to stand pat and refuse to cancel this contract. Insist on going through with it and make Mr. Parker pay for it. He can afford it, and he is good for it. He will not repudiate a promise to pay while he has money in bank or securities to hypothecate. He is absolutely responsible financially. He owns a controlling interest in the First National Bank of El Toro, and he has a three-hundred-thousand-dollar equity in this ranch in the shape of a first mortgage ripe for foreclosure—you can levy on those assets if he declines to go through with the contract. Force him to go through; force him, old friend of my father and mine and enemy of all Japanese! For God's sake, stand by me! I'm desperate, Mr. Conway—"

"Call me 'Bill,' son," Conway interrupted gently.

"You know what the Farrels have been up against always, Bill," Don Mike pleaded. "That easy-going Spanish blood! But, Bill, I'm a throw-back. By God, I am! Give me this chance—this God-given chance—and the fifty-per-cent. Celtic strain in me and the twenty-five-per-cent. Gaelic that came with my Galvez blood will save the San Gregorio to white men! Give me the water, Bill; give me the water that will make my valley bloom in the August heat, and then, with the tremendous increase in the value of the land, I'll find somebody, some place, who will trust me for three hundred thousand paltry dollars to give this man and save my ranch. This is a white-man's country, and John Parker is striving, for a handful of silver, to betray us and make it a yellow paradise."

His voice broke under the stress of his emotion; he gulped and the tears welled to his eyes.

"Oh, Bill, for God's sake don't fail me!"

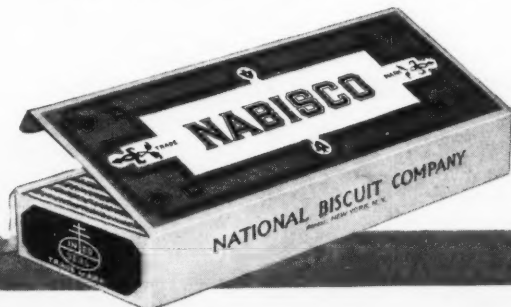


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he begged. "You're a Californian! You've seen the first Japs come! Only fifteen years ago, they were such a rare sight the little boys used to chase them and throw rocks at them just to see them run in terror. But the little boys do not throw rocks at them now, and they no longer run. They have the courage of numbers and the prompt and forceful backing of a powerful fraternity across the Pacific. You've seen them spread gradually over the land—why, Bill, just think of the San Gregorio five years hence—the San Gregorio where you and I have hunted quail since I was ten years old. You gave me my first shotgun—"

"Sonny," said old Bill Conway gently, passing his arms across Farrel's shoulders, "I wish to goodness you'd shut up! I haven't got three hundred thousand dollars, nor a tenth of it. If I had it I'd give it to you now and save argument. But I'll tell you what I have got, son, and that's a sense of humor. It's kept me poor all my life, but if you think it will make you rich you're welcome to it." He looked up, and his glance met Kay's. "This chap's a limited edition," he informed her gravely. "After the Lord printed one volume, he destroyed the plates. Mr. Parker, sir—" He stepped up to John Parker and smote the latter lightly on the breast—"Tag; you're it!" he announced pleasantly. "I'll cancel this contract when you hand me a certified check for twenty-four billion, nine-hundred and eighty-two millions, four hundred and seventeen thousand, six hundred and one dollars, nine cents, and two mills."

"Conway," Parker answered him quietly, "I like your sense of humor, even if it does hurt. However, you force me to fight the devil with fire. Still, for the sake of the amenities, we should always make formal declaration of war before beginning hostilities."

"And that's a trick you didn't learn in Japan," the old contractor reminded him.

"So I hereby declare war. I'm a past master at holding hard to whatever I do not wish the other fellow to take away from me, so build your dam and be damned to you. Of course, if you complete your contract eventually, you will force me to pay you for it, but in the interim you will have had to use clam-shells and woodpecker heads for money. I know I can stave off settlement of your judgment for a year; after that, should I acquire title to the Rancho Palomar, I will settle with you promptly."

"And if you shouldn't acquire title, I shall look to my young friend, Don Miguel Farrel, for reimbursement. While at present the future may look as black to Mike as the Earl of Hell's riding-boots, his credit is good with me. Is this new law you've promulgated retroactive?"

"What do you mean?"

"You'll settle with me for all work performed up to the moment of this break in diplomatic relations, won't you?"

"That's quite fair, Conway. I'll do that." Despite the chagrin of having to wage for the nonce a losing battle, Parker laughed heartily and with genuine sincerity. Don Mike joined with him and the charged atmosphere cleared instantly.

"Bill Conway, you're twenty-four carat all through." Farrel laid a hand affec-

tionately on his father's old friend. "Be sure to come down to the hacienda tomorrow night and get your check. We dine at six-thirty."

"As is?" Conway demanded, surveying his rusty old business suit and hard, soiled hands.

"As is, Bill."

"Fine! Well, we've come to a complete understanding without falling out over it, haven't we?" he demanded of Kay and her mother. "With malice toward none and justice toward all—or words to that effect. Eh?"

"Oh, get back into your office, Conway, and cast up the account against me. Figure a full day for the men and the mules, although our break came at half-past three. I'm a contrary man, but I'm not small. Come on, Mr. Farrel, let's go home," Parker suggested.

"Little birds in their nest should agree," old Conway warned, as, with a sweep of his battered old hat to the ladies, he turned to reenter his office. With a nod of farewell, John Parker and his wife started riding down the draw, while Farrel turned to unloosen his saddle-girth and adjust the heavy stock-saddle on the pinto's back. While he was thus engaged, Kay rode up to the door of Conway's rough little office, bent down from Panchito, and peered in.

"Bill Conway!" she called softly.

Bill Conway came to the door.

"What's the big idea, Miss Parker?"

The girl glanced around and saw that Don Mike was busy with the latigo, so she leaned down, drew her arm around the astounded Conway's neck, and implanted on his ruddy, bristly cheek a kiss as soft—so Bill Conway afterward described it—as goose-hair.

"You build that dam," she whispered, blushing furiously, "and see to it that it's a good dam and will hold water for years. I'm the reserve in this battle—understand? When you need money see me, but, oh, please do not tell Don Mike about it. I'd die of shame."

She whirled Panchito and galloped down the draw, with Miguel Farrel loping along behind her, while, from the door of his shack of an office, old Bill Conway looked after them and thoughtfully rubbed a certain spot on his cheek. Long after the young folks had disappeared round the base of El Palomar, he continued to gaze. Eventually he was brought out of his reverie when a cur dog belonging to one of the teamster's on the grading gang thrust a cold muzzle into his hand.

"Purp," murmured Mr. Conway softly, "this isn't a half-bad old world, even if a fellow does grow old and finds himself hairless and childless and half broke and shackled to the worst automobile in the world, bar none. And do you know why it isn't such a rotten world as some folks claim? No? Well, I'll tell you, purp. It's because it keeps a-movin'. And do you know what keeps it a-movin'. Purp, it's love!"

In *The Pride of Palomar* Mr. Kyne is telling something more than a great story; he is presenting a picture as clear as it is startling of the Japanese problem that has now become of national importance, and telling a great truth. Do not miss the next instalment in *June Cosmopolitan*.



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Roulette

(Continued from page 25)

But, again, who knows? Her past was vivid with the heat-lightning of the sharp storms of men's lives. At nineteen, she had worn in public restaurants a star-sapphire necklace, originally designed by a soap magnate for his wife of these, her birth-stones.

At twenty, her fourteen-room apartment faced the park, but was on the ground floor, because the vice-president of a bank, a black-broadcloth little pelican of a man, who stumped on a cane and had a pink tin roof to his mouth, disliked elevators.

At twenty-three, and unmentionably enough, a son of a Brazilian coffee king, inflamed with the devilry of debauch, ground a wine-tumbler against her forehead, inducing the pockmarks. At twenty-seven, it was the fourth vice-president of a Harlem bank. At twenty-nine, an interim. Startling to Josie Drew. Terrifying. Lean. For the first time in eight years, her gasoline expenditures amounted to ninety cents a month instead of from forty to ninety dollars. And then not at the garage but at the corner drug store. Cleaning fluid for kicked-out glove- and slipper-tips.

The little jangle of chatelaine absurdities which she invariably affected—mesh bag, lip-stick, memorandum (for the traffic in telephone-numbers), vanity and cigarette-case were gold—filled. There remained a sapphire necklace, but faithfully copied to the wink of the stars, and the pearl clasp by the Chemic Jewel Company. Much of the indoor appeal of Miss Drew was still the pink silkiness of her, a little stiffened from washing and ironing it is true, but there was a flesh-colored arrangement of intricate drape that was rosily kind to her. Also a vivid yellow one of a later and less expensive period, all heavily slashed in Valenciennes lace. This brought out a bit of virago through her induced blondness, but just the same it italicized her, just as the crescent of black court-plaster exclaimed at the whiteness of her back.

She could spend an entire morning fluffing at these things, pressing out, with a baby electric iron and a sleeve-board, a crumple of chiffon to new sheerness, getting at spots with cleaning fluid. Under alcoholic duress, Josie dropped things. There was a furious stain down the yellow, from a home brew of canned lobster à la Newburg. The stain she eliminated entirely by cutting out the front panel and wearing it skimpier.

In these first slanting years, in her furnished flat of upright, mandolin-attachment piano, nude plaster-of-Paris bacchante holding a cluster of pink-glass incandescent grapes, divan mountainous with scented pillows, she was about as obvious as a gilt slipper that has started to rub, or a woman's kiss that is beery and leaves a red imprint.

To Nicholas Simkevitz, whose adolescence had been languid, and who had never known a woman with a fling, a perfume, or a *moue* (there had been only a common-sense-heeled co-ed of his law-school days and the rather plump little sister-in-law of Leo's), the dawn of Josie cleft open something in his consciousness, releasing maddened perceptions that stung his eyeballs. He sat in the imitation cheap

frailty of her apartment like a young bull with threads of red in his eyeballs, his head, not unpoetic with its shag of black hair, lowered as if to bash at the impotence of the thing she roused in him.

Also, a curious thing had happened to Josie. Something, so jaded in her that she thought it long dead, was stirring sapily, as if with springtime.

Maybe it was a resurgence of sense of power after months of terror that the years had done for her.

At any rate, it was something strangely and deeply sweet.

"Nicky boy," she said, sitting on the couch with her back against the wall, her legs out horizontally, and clapping her rubbed, gilt slippers together; "Nicky boy, go home ten o'clock to-night. Josie girl tired."

Her mouth, like a red-paper rose that had been crushed there, was always bunched to baby-talk. She had been in his arms, and his sense of her dishevelment rushed over him in an ecstatic rash and, to her, his young fierceness was wine.

"Come here," he said and jerked her so that the breath jumped.

"Won't," she said, and came.

His male prowess was enormous to him. He could bend her back almost double with a kiss, and did. His first kisses that he spent wildly. He could have carried her off like Persephone's bull, and wanted to, so swift his mood. His flair for life and for her leaped out at her like a flame and something precious that had hardly survived sixteen seemed to stir in the early grave of her heart.

"Oh, Nicky boy, Nicky boy!" she said, and he caught that she was yearning over him.

"Don't say it in down curves like that. Say it up. Up!"

She didn't get this, but with the half-fearful tail of her eye for the clock, let him hold her quiescent, while the relentlessly sliding moment ticked against her unease.

"I'm jealous of every hour you lived before I met you."

"Big-bad-eat-Josie-up-boy!"

"I want to kiss your eyes until they go in deep—through you—I don't know—until they hurt—deep—"

"Oh—oh—Josie scared!"

"You're like one of those orange Angora kittens. Yellow. Soft. Deep."

"I Nicky's pussy."

"I can see myself in your eyes. Shut me up in them."

"Josie so tired."

"Of me?"

"Nicky so—so strong!"

"My poor pussy, I didn't mean—"

"Nicky boy, go home like good Nicky."

"I don't want ever to go home."

"Go now, Josie says."

"You mean never."

"Now!"

He kissed his "No! No!" down against each of her eyelids.

"You must," she said, this time, and pushed him off.

For a second, he sat quite still, the black shine in his eyes seeming to give off diamond points.

"You're nervous," he said, and jerked her back so that the breath jumped again.

The tail of her glance curved to the gilt clock half hidden behind a litter of used high-ball glasses and then seeing that his quickly suspicious eye followed hers,

"No," she said; "not nervous. Just tired—and thirsty."

He poured her quite a tall drink from a decanter and held it so that, while she sipped, her teeth were magnified through the tumbler, and he thought that adorable and tilted the glass higher against her lips, and when she choked, soothed her with a crush of kisses.

"You devil!" he said. "Everything you do maddens me."

There was a step outside and a scraping noise at the lock. It was only a vaudeville youth, slender as a girl, who lived on the floor above, feeling unsteadily, and a bit the worse for wear, for the lock that must eventually fit his key.

But on that scratch into the keyhole, Josie leaped up in terror, so that Nicholas went staggering back against the bacchante, shattering some of the pink grapes to a fine ring of crystal, and on that instant she clicked out the remaining lights, showing him, with an unsuspected and catamount strength, into an adjoining box of a kitchenette.

There an uncovered bulb burned greasily over a small refrigerator that stood on a table and left only the merest slit of walking-space. It was the none too fastidious kitchen of a none too fastidious woman. A pair of dress-shields hung on the improvised clothes line of a bit of twine. A clump of sardines, one end still shaped to the tin cloyed in its own oil, crumbily, as if bread had been sopped in, the emptied tin itself, with the top rolled back with a patent key, filled now with old beer. Obviously the remaining contents of a tumbler had been flung in. Cigarette stubs floated. A pasteboard cylindrical box, labeled "Sodium Bicarbonate," had a spoon stuck in it. A rubber glove drooped dead over the sink edge.

On the second that he stood in that smelling fog, probably for no longer than it took the swinging door to settle, something of sickness rushed over Nicholas. The unaired odors of old foods. Those horrific things on the line. The oil that had so obviously been sopped up with bread. The old beer, edged in grease. Something of sickness and a panoramic flash of things absurdly, almost unreasonably irrelevant.

Snow, somewhere back in his memory. A frozen silence of it that was clean and thin to the smell. The ridges in the rattan with which his father had whipped him the night after the Chinese laundry. The fine white head of the dean of the law school. His mother baking, for Friday night, in a blue-and-white gingham apron that enveloped her. Red curls—some one's—somewhere. The string of tiny Oriental pearls that rose and fell with the little pouter-pigeon swell of a bosom. Ada's pretty perturbation. His cousin's sister-in-law. A small hole in a pink-silk stocking, peeping, like a little rising sun, above the heel of a rubbed gilt slipper. Josie's slipper.

Something seemed suddenly to rise in Nicholas, with the quick capillarity of water boiling over.



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The old familiar star-spangled red over which Sara had time after time laid sedative hand against his seering sprang out. The pit of his passion was bottomless, into which he was tumbling with the icy laughter of breaking glass.

Then he struck out against the swinging door so that it ripped outward with a sough of stale air, striking Josie Drew as she approached it from the room-side so violently that her teeth bit down into her lips and the tattling blood began to flow.

"Nicky! It's a mistake. I thought—my sister— It got so late—you wouldn't go. Go now. The key—turning—nervous—silly—mistake—go—"

He laughed, something exhilarant in his boiling-over, and even in her sudden terror of him, she looked at his bare teeth and felt the unnice beauty of the storm.

"Nicky," she half cried, "don't be—foolish—I—"

And then he struck her across the lip, so that her teeth cut in again.

"There is some one coming here tonight," he said, with his smile still very white.

She sat on the couch trying to bravado down her trembling.

"And what if there is? He'll beat you up for this. You fool! I've tried to explain a dozen times. You know, or if you don't you ought to, that there's a—friend. A traveling salesman. Automobile accessories. Long trips but good money. Good money! And here you walk in a few weeks ago and expect to find the way clear! Good boy, you like some one to go ahead of you with a snow-cleaner, don't you? Yes; there's some one due in here off his trip to-night. What's the use trying to tell Nicky boy with his hot head? He's got a hot head too. Go; and let me clear the way for you, Nicky. For keeps, if you say the word. But I have to know where I'm at. Every girl does, if she wants to keep her body and soul together. You don't let me know where I stand. You know you've got me round your little finger for the saying; but you don't say. Only, go now, Nicky boy. For God's sake—it's five minutes to eleven and, he's due in on that ten-forty-five. Nicky boy, go, and come back to me at six to-morrow night. I'll have the way clear then—for keeps. Quit blinking at me like that, Nicky. You scare me. Quit! When you come back to-morrow evening, there won't be any more going home for Josie's Nicky boy. Nicky, go now—he's hot-headed too. Quit blinking, Nicky—for God's sake—Nicky—"

It was then Nicholas bent back her head as he did when he kissed her there on the swan's arch to her neck; only, this time his palm was against her forehead and his other between her shoulder blades.

"I could kill you," he said, and laughed with his teeth. "I could bend back your neck until it breaks."

"No—o—Nicky—"

"And I want to," he said through the star-spangled red. "I want you to crack when I twist—I'm going to twist—twist—"

And he did, shoving back her hair with his palm, and quite suddenly bared, almost like a grimace to him, was the glass-shotted spot where the wine-tumbler had ground in, greenish now, like the flanges of her nostrils.

Somewhere—down a dear brow was a

Cosmopolitan for May, 1921

singed spot like that—singed with the flame of pain—

"Nicky, you've sprained my neck. If you hadn't let go, I—I—couldn't breathe. Nicky—kiss me—to-morrow at six—clear for you—always—only go—please, boy—my terrible—my wonderful—to-morrow at six."

Somehow he was walking home, the burn of her lips still against his, loathsome and gorgeous to his desires. He wanted to tear her out by the roots from his consciousness. To be rollickingly, cleanly free of her. His teeth shone against the darkness as he walked, drenched to the skin of his perspiration, and one side of his collar loose, the buttonhole slit.

Rollickingly free of her, and yet how devilishly his shoes could clat on the sidewalk: "To-morrow at six. To-morrow at six. To-morrow at six."

It was sometime after midnight when he let himself into the up-town apartment. He thought he heard his mother, trying to be swift, padding down the hallway as if she had been waiting near the door. This would have angered him.

The first of these nights, only four weeks before (it seemed years), he had come in hotly about four o'clock and gone to bed. About five, he thought, he heard sounds, almost like the scratch of a little dog, at his door. He sprang up and flung it open. The flash of his mother's gray flannel wrapper turned a corner of the hall. She must have been crying out there and wanting him to need her. None the less, it had angered him. These were men's affairs.

But in his room to-night, the light burned placidly on the little table next to the bed, a glass of milk on a plate beside it. The bed was turned back, snowy sheets forming a cool envelop for him to slip in between. The room lay sedately in shadow. A straight man's room. All books, uncurving furniture, photographs of his parents taken on their twenty-fifth anniversary, standing on the chiffonier in a double leather frame that opened like a book. Face down on the reading-table beside the glass of milk, quite as he must have left it the night before, except where Sara had lifted it to dust under, a volume on criminal law, already a prognosis, as it were, of that branch of the law he was ultimately to bend brilliantly to fuller justice.

Toward morning, Nicholas slept finally, and at ten o'clock of a rain-swept Sunday forenoon awoke, as he knew he must, to the grip of a blinding headache, so-called for want of a better noun to interpret the kind of agony, which, starting somewhere round his eyes, could prick each nerve of his body into a little flame, as if countless matches had been struck.

As a youngster, these attacks had not been infrequent after a fit of crying. The first, in fact, had followed the burning of the cat; a duet of twin spasms then, howled into Sara's apron. And once after he had fished an exhausted comrade out of an ice-hole in Bronx Park. They had followed the lead-pipe affairs and the Chinese-laundry episode with dreadful inevitability. But it had been five years since the last—the night his mother had fainted with terror at what she found concealed in the toes of his gymnasium shoes.

Incredible that into his maphead should come the waving specter of those early passions.

At eleven o'clock, after she heard him up and moving about, his mother carried him his kiss and his coffee steaming black, the way he liked it. She had wanted to bring him an egg, in fact, had prepared one to just his liking of two minutes and thirty seconds, but had thought better of it and wisely, because he drank the coffee at a quick gulp and set down the cup with his mouth wry and his eyes squeezed tight. From the taste of it, he remembered horribly the litter of tall glasses beside the gilt clock.

With all her senses taut not to fuss round him with little jerks and pullings, Sara jerked and pulled. Too well she knew that furrow between his eyes, and wanted unspeakably to tuck him back into bed, lower the shades, and prepare him a vile mixture good for exactly everything that did not ail him. But Sara could be wise even with her son. So, instead, she flung up the shade, letting him wince at the clatter, dragged off the bedclothes into a tremendous heap on the chair, beat up the pillows, and turned the mattress with a single-handed flop.

"The Sunday-morning papers are in the dining-room, son."

"Uhm."

He was standing in his dressing-gown at the rain-lashed window, strumming. Lean, long, and, to Sara, godlike, with the thick shock of his straight hair still wet from the shower.

"Mrs. Berkowitz telephoned already this morning with such a grand compliment for you, son. Her brother-in-law, Judge Rosen, says you're the brains of your firm, even if you are only the junior partner yet, and your way looks straight ahead for big things."

"Uhm. Who's talking out there so incessantly, ma?"

"That's your uncle Aaron. He came over for Sunday-morning breakfast with your father. You should see the way he tracked up my hall with his wet shoes. I'm sending him right back home with your father. They should clutter up your aunt Gussie's house with their pinochle and ashes. I had 'em last Sunday. She don't need to let herself off so easy every week. It's enough if I ask them all over here for supper to-night. Not?"

"Don't count on me, ma. I won't be home for supper."

There was a tom-tom to the silence against her beating ear-drums.

"All right, son," she said, pulling her lips until they smiled at him. "With Leo and Irma, that'll only make six of us, then."

He kissed her, but so tiredly that again it was almost her irresistible woman's impulse to drag down that fiercely black head to the beating width of her bosom, and plead from him drop by drop some of the bitter welling of pain she could see in the tide of his eyes.

"Nicky"—She started to cry, and, then at his straightening back from her. "Come out in the dining-room after I pack off the men. I got my work to do. That nix of a house-girl left last night. Such sass, too! I'm better off doing my work alone."

Sara, poor dear, could not keep a servant, and except for the instigation of her husband and son, preferred not to. They rebelled at the exactitude of her household and her disputative reign of the kitchen.



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"I'll be out presently, ma," he said, and flung himself down in the leather Morris chair, lighting his pipe and ostensibly settling down to the open-faced volume on criminal law.

Sara straightened a straight chair. She knew, almost as horribly as if she had looked in on it, the mucky thing that was happening. The intuitive sixth sense of her hovered over him with great wings that wanted to spread. Josie Drew was no surmise with her. The blond head and the red hat were tattooed in pain on her heart, and she trembled in a bath of fear, and, trembling, smiled and went out.

Sitting there while the morning ticked on, head thrown back, eyes closed, and all the little darting nerves at him, the dawn of Nicholas Simkovitz's repugnance was all for self. Lying cleanly in the unfrowsy room, fresh from his own fresh sheets. His mother's eyes with that clean-sky quality in them. The affectionate wrangling of those two decent voices from the dining-room. Books! His books, that he loved—his mother, with immensity and grandeur in her eyes, listening from a privileged first-row bench to the supreme quality of his mercy. Judge—Simkovitz!

But tastily, too, too tastily and undeniably against his lips, throughout these conjurings lay the last crushy kiss of Josie Drew. That swanny arch to her neck as he bent it back. He had kissed her there. Countlessly.

He tried to dwell on his aversions for her. She had once used an expletive in his presence that had sickened him and, noting its effect, she had not reiterated. The unfastidious brunette roots to her light hair! That sink with the grease-rimmed old beer! But, then—her eyes where the brows slid down to make them heavy-lidded. That bit of blue vein in the crotch of her elbow. That swanny arch.

Back somewhere, as the tidy morning wore on, the tranced, the maddening repetition began to tick itself through: "Six o'clock. Six o'clock."

He rushed out into the hallway and across to the parlor pinkly lit with velours even through the rainy day and so inflexibly calm. Sara might have measured the distance between the chairs, so regimental they stood. The pink-velour curlicue divan with the two pink, gold-tasseled cushions, carelessly exact, the onyx-topped table, brass-ruffled, with the pink-velour drape, also gold-tasseled. The pair of equi-distant and immaculate china cuspidors, rose-wreathed. The smell of Sunday.

"Nicky, that you?"

It was his mother, from the dining-room.

"Yes, ma." And sauntered in.

There were two women sitting at the round table, shelling nuts. One of them his mother, the other Miss Ada Berkowitz, who jumped up, spilling hulls.

Nicholas, in the velvetreen dressing-gown with the collar turned up, started to back out, Mrs. Simkovitz spoiling that.

"You can come in, Nicky. Ada'll excuse you. I guess she's seen a man in his dressing-gown before, the magazine advertisements are full with them. And on Sunday with a headache from all week working so hard, a girl can forgive. He shouldn't think with his head so much, I always tell him, Ada."

"I didn't know he was here," said Miss

Berkowitz, which was true, and already thinking in terms of what she might have worn.

"I telephoned over for Ada, Nicky. They got an automobile, and she don't need to get her feet wet to come over to a lonesome old woman on a rainy Sunday, to spend the day and learn me how to make those delicious stuffed dates like she fixed for her mother's card-party last week. Draw up a chair, Nicky, and help."

She was casual; she was matter of fact; she was bent on the business of nut-cracking. They crashed softly, each never so much as bruised by her carefully even pressure.

"Thanks," said Nicholas, and sat down, not caring to, but with good-enough grace. He wanted his coat, somehow, and fell to strumming the table-top.

"Don't, Nicky; you make me nervous."

"Here," said Miss Berkowitz, and gave him a cracker and a handful of nuts. The little crashings resumed.

Ada had very fair skin against dark hair, slightly too inclined to curl. There was quite a creamy depth to her; a wee pinch could raise a bruise. The kind of whiteness hers that challenged and did not show up to any great advantage the string of tiny Oriental pearls she wore at her throat. Her healthily pink cheeks and her little round bosom were plump, and across the back of each of her hands were four dimples that flashed in and out as she bore down on the cracker. She was as clear as a mountain stream.

"A trifle too plumpy," he thought, but, just the same, wished he had wet his military brushes.

"Ada has just been telling me, Nicky, about her ambition to be an interior decorator for the insides of houses. I think it is grand the way some girls that are used to the best of everything nowadays prepare themselves for it, if God forbid, they should ever have to make their own livings. I give them credit for it. Tell Nicky, Ada, about the drawing you did last week that your teacher showed to the class."

"Oh," said Ada, blushing softly, "Nicholas—Nicky isn't interested in that."

"Yes, I am," said Nicholas politely, eating one of the meats.

"You mean the Tudor dining-room—"

"No, no! You know, the blue-and-white one you said you liked best of all."

"It was a nursery," began Ada softly. "Just one of those blue-and-white darlingnesses for somebody's little darling."

"For somebody's little darling," repeated Mrs. Simkovitz silently. She had the habit when moved, of mouthing people's words after them.

"My idea was—oh, it's so silly to be telling it again, Mrs. Simkovitz—"

"Silly!" I think it's grand that a girl brought up to the best should want to make something of herself. Don't you, Nicky?"

"H-m-m."

"Well, my little idea was, white walls with little Delft-blue borders of waddling duckies; white, dotted-swiss curtains in the brace of sunny, southern-exposure windows with little Delft-blue borders of more waddling duckies; a little white-enamel crib painted in duckies and dear little nursery rimes painted in blue on the headboard, to keep baby's dreams sweet."

"Baby's dreams sweet! I ask you, is that cute, Nick? Baby's dreams she even interior decorates."

"My—instructor liked that idea, too. He gave me 'A' on the drawing."

"He should have given you the whole alphabet. And tell him about the chairs, Ada. Such originality."

"Oh, Mrs. Simkovitz, that was just a—little—idea—"

"The modesty of her! Believe me, if it was mine, I'd call it a big one. Tell him."

"Mummy and daddy chairs, I call them."

SARA (mouthing): "Mummy and daddy—"

"Two white-enamel chairs to stand on either side of the crib so when mummy and daddy run up in their evening clothes to kiss baby good-night—oh, I just mean two pretty white chairs, one for mummy and one for daddy." Little crash.

"I ask you, Nicky, is that poetical? So when mummy and daddy run up to kiss baby good-night. I remember once in Russia, Nicky, all the evening clothes we had was our nightgowns, but when you and your little twin brother were two and a half years old, one night, I—"

"Mrs. Simkovitz, did you have twins?"

"Did I have twins, Nicky, she asks me. She didn't know you were twins. A red one I had as red as my black one is black. You see my Nicky how black and mad-looking he is even when he's glad; well, just so—"

"Now, ma!"

"Just so beautiful and fierce and red was my other beautiful baby. You didn't know, Ada, that piece of my heart, the red of my blood, I left lying out there. Nicky—she didn't know—"

She could be so blanched and so stricken when the saga of her motherhood came out in her eyes, the pallor of her face jutting out her features like lonely landmarks on wasteland, that her husband and her son had learned how to dread for her and spare her.

"Now, ma! Now, ma!" said Nicholas, and rose to stand behind her chair, holding her poor quivering chin in the cup of his hand. "Come; one rainy Sunday is enough. Let's not have an indoor as well as an outdoor storm. Come along; didn't I hear Miss Ada play the piano one evening over at Leo's? Up-see-la—who said you weren't my favorite dancing partner?" And waltzed her, half dragging back, toward the parlor. "Come; some music!"

There were the usual demurrings from Ada, rather prettily pink, and Mrs. Simkovitz, with the threat of sobs swallowed, opening the upright piano to dust the dustless keyboard with her apron, and Nicholas, his sagging pipe quickly supplied with one of the rose-twined cuspidors for ash-receiver, hunched down in the pink-velour armchair of enormous upholstered hips.

The "Turkish Patrol" was what Ada played and then, "Who Is Sylvia?" and sang it as frailly as a bird.

At one o'clock there was dinner, that immemorial Sunday meal of roast chicken with its supplicating legs up off the platter; dressing to be gouged out; sweet potatoes in amber icing; a master stroke of Mrs. Simkovitz called "*Matzos Klöse*," balls of unleavened bread, frizzling, even as she served them, in a hot butter bath and light-brown onions. A stuffed goose neck,



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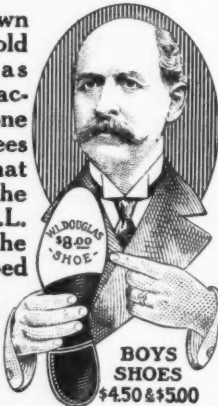
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bursting of flavor. Gravy. Cheese pie twice the depth of the fork that cut in. Coffee in large cups. More cracking of nuts, interspersed with raisins now and then. Ada cunningly enveloped in a much too large apron, helping Mrs. Simkovitz to clear it all away.

Smoking there in his chair beside the dining-room window, rain the unrelenting threnody of the day, Nicholas, fed, closed his eyes to the rhythm of their comings and goings through the swinging door that led to the kitchen. Comings—and-goings—his mother, who rustled so cleanly of starch—Ada—clear—yes; that was it—clear as a mountain stream. Their small laughters—comings—goings—

It was almost dusk when he awoke, the pink-shaded piano-lamp already lighted in the parlor beyond, the window-shade at his side drawn and an afghan across his knees. It was snug there in the rosiest dusk. The women were in the kitchen yet, or was it again? Again, he supposed, looking at his watch. He had slept three hours. Presently he rose and sauntered out. There was coffee fragrance on the air of the large white kitchen, his mother hunched to the attitude of wielding a can-opener, and at the snowy oilclothed table, Ada, slicing creamy slabs off the end of a Swiss cheese.

"Sleepyhead!" she greeted, holding up a sliver for him to nibble. And his mother:

"That was a good rest for you, son? You feel better?"

"Immense!" he said, hunching his shoulders and stretching his hands down into his pockets in a yawny well-being.

"I wish, then, you would put another leaf in the table for me. There's four besides your father coming over from aunt Gussie's. I just wish you would look at Ada. For a girl that don't have to turn her hand at home with two servants, and a laundress every other week, just look how handy she is with everything she touches."

The litter of Sunday-night supper, awaiting its transfer to the dining-room table, lay spread in the faithful geometry of the cold hebdomadal repast. A platter of ruddy sliced tongue. One of noonday remnants of cold chicken. Ovals of liverwurst. A mound of potato salad, crisscrossed with strips of pimento. A china basket of the stuffed dates, all kissed with sugar. Half of an enormously thick cheese cake. Two uncovered apple pies. A stack of delicious rasin-stuffed curlicues, known as "Schneken." Pickles with a fern of dill across them. Ada's touch—the dill. A dish of stuffed eggs with a toothpick stuck in each half. Also Ada's touch—the toothpicks.

She moved rather pussily, he thought, sometimes her fair cheeks quivering slightly to the vibration of her walk, as if they had jelled. And too, there was something rather snug and plump in the way her little hands with the eight dimples moved about things. Laying the slabs of Swiss cheese. Unstacking cups.

"No; only seven cups, Ada. Nicky—ain't going to be home to supper."

"Oh! she said. "Excuse me, I—I—thought—" And looked up at him to deny that it mattered.

"Isn't that what you said this morning, Nicky?" Poor Sara, she almost failed herself then, because her voice ended in quite a dry click in her throat.

He stood watching the resumed unstacking of the cups, each with its crisp little grate against its neighbor.

"One," said Ada, "two, three, four, five, six—seven?"

He looked very long and lean and his most darkly nervous self, except that he dillydallied on his heels like a much too tall boy not wanting to look foolish.

"If Miss Ada will provide another cup and saucer, I think I'll stay home."

"As you will," said Sara, disappearing into the dining-room with the mound of salad and the basket of sugar-kissed dates.

She put them down rather hastily when she got there, because, sillily enough, she thought, for the merest instant, she was going to faint.

The week that Judge Simkovitz tried his first case in Court of General Sessions (a murder case, toward which his criminal-law predilection seemed so inevitably to lead him) his third child, a little daughter with lovely creamy skin against slightly too curly hair, was lying, just two days old, in a blue-and-white nursery with an absurd border of blue waddling ducks across the wall-paper.

Ada, therefore, was not present at this inaugural occasion of his first trial. But each of the two weeks of its duration, in a first-row bench of the privileged, so that her gaze was almost on a dotted line with her son's, sat Sara Simkovitz, mostly her hands crossed over her waist-line, her bosom filling and waning and the little jet folderols on her bonnet blinking, her face poor mask for the throbs of her heart-beats chasing across it at will. Tears had their way with her, prideful, joyful at her son's new estate, sometimes bitterly salt at the life in the naked his eyes must look upon.

Once, during the recital of the defendant, Sara almost seemed to bleed her tears, so poignantly terrible they came, scorching her eyes of a pain too exquisite to be analyzed yet too excruciating to be endured.

III

VENTURE back—will you?—to the ice and red of that Russian dawn when on the snow the footsteps that lead toward the horizon were the color of blood, and one woman who could not keep her eyes ahead moaned as she fled, prayed, and even screamed to return to her dead in the bullet-riddled horse-trough.

Toward the noon of that day—a gray one that smelled charred—a fugitive group from a distant village that was still burning, faltered, as it too fled toward the horizon, in the blackened village of Vodna, because a litter had to be fashioned for an old man whose feet were frozen, and a mother whose baby had perished at her breast would bury her dead.

Huddled beside the horse-trough, over a poor fire she had kindled of charred wood, Hanscha, the midwife, (Hanscha, the Drunk, they called her fascinatedly in a Pale of generations of sober women) spied Mosher's flung coat and reached for it eagerly, with an eye to tearing it into strips to wrap her tortured feet.

A child stirred as she snatched it, waiting lightly, and, the instinct of her calling rather the predominant motive, Hanscha with her fume breath warmed it closer to

life and trod the one hundred and eight miles to the port with it strapped to her back like a pack.

Thus it was that Schmulka, the red twin, came to America, and for the first fourteen years of his life slept on a sour pallet in a sour tenement he shared with Hanscha, who with filthy hands brought children into the filthy slums.

Jason, she called him, because that was the name of the ship that carried them over—a rolling tub that had been horrible with the cries of cattle and seasickness.

At fourteen, he was fierce and rebellious and down on the Juvenile Court records for truancy, petty trafficking in burned-out opium, vandalism, and gang-vagrancy.

In Hanscha's sober hours he was her despair, and she could be horrible in her anger, once the court reprimanding her and threatening to take Jason from her because of welts found on his back.

It was in her cups that she was proud of him, and so it behooved Jason to drink her down to her pallet, which he could easily.

He was handsome. His red hair had darkened to the same bronze of the samovar and he was straight as the drop of an apple from the branch. He was reckless. Could turn a pretty penny easily, even dangerously, and spend it with a flip for a push-cart bauble.

Once he brought home a plaster-of-Paris Venus. The Melos one with the beautiful arch to her torso of a bow that instant after the arrow has flown. She cuffed him for the expenditure, but secretly her old heart, which since childhood had subjected her to strange, rather epileptical sinking-spells and had induced the drinking, warmed her with pride in his choice.

Hanscha—yes—with her veiny nose and the dreadful single hair growing out of a mole on her chin, was not without her erudition. She had read for the midwifery, and back in the old days could recite the bones in the body.

She let the boy read nights, sometimes even to dropping another coin into the gas-meter. Some of the books were the lewd penny ones of the Bowery book-stands, old medical treatises too, purchased three for a quarter and none too nice reading for the growing boy. But there he had also found a "Les Miserables" and the "Confessions" of St. Augustine, which last, if he had known it, was a rare edition, but destined for the ash-pit.

Once he read Hanscha a bit of poetry out of a furiously stained old volume of verse, so fragrantly beautiful, to him, this bit, that it wound round him like incense, the perfume of it going deeply and stinging his eyes to tears.

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's star,
Hath elsewhere had its setting,

And cometh from afar.

Not in entire forgetfulness,

And not in utter nakedness,

But trailing clouds of glory, do we come

From God, who is our home;

Heaven lies about us in our infancy.

Shades of the prison-house begin to close,

Upon the growing boy.

But he beholds the light, and whence it flows;

He sees it in his joy;

The Youth, who daily farther from the East

Must travel, still is nature's priest,

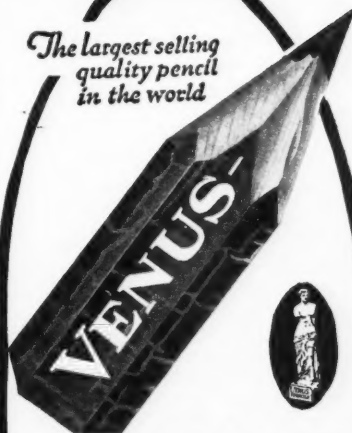
And by the vision splendid

Is on his way attended;

At length the man perceives it die away,

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DEANS

MENTHOLATED COUGH DROPS

But Hanscha was drunk and threw some coffee-sopped bread at him, and so his foray into poetry ended in the slops of disgust.

A Miss Manners, a society social worker who taught poverty sweet forbearance every Tuesday from four until six, wore a forty-eight-diamond bar pin on her underbodice (on Tuesday from four until six), and whose gray-suede slippers were ever so slightly blackened from the tripping trip from front door to motor and back, took him up, as the saying is, and for two weeks Jason disported himself on the shorn lawns of the Manners summer place at Dreamwold, where the surf creamed at the edge of the terrace and the smell of the sea set something beating against his spirit as if it had a thousand imprisoned wings.

There he developed quite a flair for the law-books in Judge Manners' laddered library. Miss Manners found him there reading on stomach and elbows, his heels waving in the air.

Judge Manners talked with him and discovered a legal turn of mind, and there followed some veranda-talk of educating and removing him from his environment. But that very afternoon Jason did a horrid thing. It was no more than he had seen about him all his life. Not as much. He kissed the little pigtailed daughter of the laundress and pursued her as she ran shrieking to her mother's apron. That was all—but his defiant head and the laundress's chance knowledge of his Juvenile Court record did for him.

At six o'clock that evening, with a five-dollar bill, of which he made a spitball for the judge's departing figure down the station platform, he was shipped back to Hanscha. Secretly, he was relieved. Life was easier in the tenement under the shadow of Brooklyn Bridge. The piece of its arch which he could see from his window was even beautiful, like a curve of a stone into some beyond.

That night, he fitted down into the mold his body had worn on the pallet, sighing out satisfaction.

Environment had won him back.

On the other hand, in one of those red star-spangled passions of rebellion against his fetid days, he blindly cut Hanscha with the edge of a book, which struck against her brow as he hurled it. She had been drunk, and had asked of him, at sixteen, because of the handsomeness that women would easily love in him, to cadet the neighborhood of Grand Street, using her tenement as his refuge of vice and herself as sharer of spoils.

The corner of the book cut deeply, and pride in her terror of him came out redly in her bloodshot eyes.

In the short half-term of his high-school training, he had already forged ahead of his class when he attained the maturity of working-papers. He was plunging eagerly, brilliantly, in fact, into a rapid translation of the Iliad, fired from the very first line by the epic, the hexametered anger of Achilles, and stubbornly he held out against the working-papers.

But to Hanscha they came with the inevitability of a summons rather than an alternative, and so for a year or two he brought home rather daringly precious wages from his speed in a canning factory. Then he stoked his way to Cherbourg and back, returning fiery with new and terrible oaths.

One night, Hanscha died. He found her crumpled up in the huddle of her skirts as if she had dropped in her tracks, which she had, of one of the epileptic heart-strictures.

It was hardly a grief to him. He had seen red with passion at her atrociousness too often, and somehow everything that she stood for had been part of the ache in him.

Yet it is doubtful if, released of her, he found better pastures. Bigger pastures, it is true, in what might be called an upper strata of the lower East Side, although at no time was he ever to become party to any of its underground system of crime.

Inevitably, the challenge of his personality cleared the way for him. At nineteen, he had won and lost the small fortune of thirty-three hundred dollars at a third-class gambling-resort, where he came in time to be croupier.

He dressed flashily, wore soft collars, often striped, was constantly swapping sporty scarf-pins for sportier ones, and was inevitably the center, seldom part, of a group.

Then, one evening at Cooper Union, which stands at the head of the Bowery, he enrolled for an evening course in law. But never entered the place again.

Because the next night, in a Fourteenth Street cabaret with adjacent gambling-rooms, he met one who called herself "Winnie Ross," the beginning of a heart-sickening end.

There is so little about her to relate. She was the color of cloyed honey when the sugar granules begin to show through. Pale, pimply in a fashion the powder could cover up, the sag of her facial muscles showed quite plainly through, as if weary of doling out to the years their hush-money, and she was quite obviously down at the heels. Literally so, because, when she took them off, her shoes lopped to the sides and could not stand for tipsiness.

She was Jason's first woman. She exhaled a perfume, cheap, but tickling, chewed some advertised tablets that scented her kisses, and her throat, when she threw up her head, had a swan's arch and flex to it that was mysteriously graceful.

Life had been swift and sheer with Winnie. She was very tired, and, paradoxically enough, it gave her one of her last remaining charms. Her eyelids were frightened with weariness, were waxy white of it, and they could flutter to her cheeks, like white butterflies against white, and lay shadows there that maddened Jason.

She called him "Red," although all that remained now were the lights through his browning hair, almost like the flashings of a lantern down a railroad track.

She pronounced it with a slight trilling of the "R," and if it was left in her of half a hundred loves to stir on this swift descent of her life-line, she did over Jason. Partly because he was his winged-Mercury self, and partly because—because—it was difficult for her rather fagged brain to rummage back—

Thus the rest may be told:

Entering her rooms one morning, a pair of furiously garish ones over a musical-instrument store on the Bowery, he threw himself full-length on the red-cotton divan, arms locked under his always angry-looking head and watching her through low lids trail about the room at the business of preparing him a surlily demanded cup of

coffee. Her none too immaculate pink robe trailed a cotton-lace tail rather irritatingly about her heels, which slipped as she walked, her stockings, without benefit of support, twisting about her ankles.

She was barometer for his moods which were elemental, and had learned to tremble with a queer exaltation of fear before them.

"My Red-boy blue to-day," she said, stooping as she passed and wanting to kiss him.

He let his lids drop and would have none of her. They were curiously blue, she thought, as if of unutterable fatigue and then quickly appraised that his luck was still letting him in for the walloping, now of two weeks' duration. His diamond-and opal scarf-pin was gone, and the gold cuff-links replaced with mother-of-pearl.

She could be violently bitter about money, and when the flame of his personality was not there to be reckoned with, ten times a day she ejected him bitterly, with a venom that was a psychosis, out of her further toleration. Not so far gone was Winnie but what she could count on the twist of her body and the arch of her throat as revenue-getters.

At first, Jason had been lavish, almost with a smack of some of the old days she had known, spending with the prodigality of the gambler in luck. There was a near-seal coat from him in her cupboard of near-silks, and the flimsy wooden walls of her rooms had been freshly papered in roses.

"My Red-boy blue," she would reiterate, trying to ingratiate her arms about his neck. "Red-boy tells Winnie he won't be back for two whole days, and then brings her surprise-party very next day. Red-boy can't stay away from his Winnie."

"Let go!"

"Red-boy bring Winnie nothing? Not little cenny, cenny nothing?" Drawing a design down his coat sleeve, her mouth bunched.

Suddenly he jerked her so that the breath jumped in a warm fan of it against her face.

"You're the only thing I've got in the world, Win! My luck's gone, but I've got you. Tell me I've got you." He could be equally intense over which street-car to take, and she knew it, but, somehow, it lessened for her none of the lure of his nervousity, and with her mind recoiling from his pennilessness, her body inclined.

"Tell me, Winnie, that I have you."

"You know you have," she said, and smiled with her head back so that her face foreshortened.

"I'm going far for you, Winnie. Gambling is too rotten—and too easy. I want to build bridges for you. Practise law. Corner Wall Street."

This last intrigued her.

"Once," she said lying back with her pupils enlarging with the fleeting memories she was not always alert enough to clutch. "Once—once when I lived around Central Park!—a friend of mine—vice-president of a bank, he was—well, never mind, he was my friend—it was nothing for him to turn over a thousand or two a week for me in Wall Street."

This exaggeration was gross, but it could feed the flame of his passion for her like oil.

"I'll work us up and out of this! I've got better stuff in me. I want to wind you in pearls—sapphires—diamonds."

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"I had a five-thousand-dollar string once—of star-sapphires."

"Trust me, Winnie. Help me by having confidence in me. I'm glad my luck is welshing. It will be lean at first—until I get on my legs. But it's not too late yet. Win, if only I have some one to stand by me. To believe—to fight with and for me. Get me, Girl? Believe in me."

"Sure; always play strong with the cops, Red. It's the short-cut to ready money. Ready money, Red. That's what gets you there. Don't ask any girl to hang on if it's shy. That's where I spun myself dirt many a time, hanging on after it got shy. Ugh—that's what did for me—hanging on—after it got shy."

"No! No! You don't understand. For God's sake, try to get me, Winnie! Fight up with me. It'll be lean, starting, but I'll finish strong for you."

"Don't lean on me. I'm no wailing-wall. What's it to me all your highfalutin talk? You've been as slab-sided in the pockets as a cat all month. Don't have to stand it. I've got friends—spenders—" There had been such atrocious scenes based on his jealousies of her, which some imp in her would lead her to provoke notwithstanding, that even as she spoke she regretted, and reached back for the words. "I mean—"

"I know what you mean," he said quietly, permitting her to lie back against him and baring his teeth down at her.

She actually thought he was smiling.

"I'm not a dead one by a long shot," she said, kindling with what was probably her desire to excite him.

"No?"

"No; I can still have the best. The very best. If you want to know it, a political Indian with a car as long as this room, not mentioning any names, is after me—"

She still harbored the unfortunate delusion that he was smiling.

"You thought I was up at Ossining this morning, didn't you?" he asked, lazily for him. He went there occasionally to visit a friend in the state prison who had once served him well in a gambling raid and was now doing a short-larceny term there.

"You said you were—"

"I said I was. Yes. But I came back unexpectedly, didn't I?"

"Y—yes, Red?"

"Look at me!"

She raised round and ready-to-be-terrified eyes.

"Murphy was here last night!" he cracked at her, bang-bang-bang-bang-bang, like so many pistol-shots.

"Why, Red—I—you—"

"Don't lie! Murphy was here last night! I saw him leave this morning as I came in."

It was hazard, pure and simple. Not even a wild one, because all too easily he could kiss down what would be sure to be only her half-flattered resentment.

But there was a cigar-stub on the table-edge, and certain of her adjustments of the room when he entered had been rather quick. He could be like that with her, crazily the slave of who knows what beauty he found in her, jealous of even an unaccountable inflection in her voice. There had been unmentionable frenzies of elemental anger between them, and she feared and exulted in these strange poles of his nature.

"Murphy was here last night!"

It had happened—in spite of a caution worthy of a finer finesse than hers, and suddenly she seemed to realize the quality of her fear for him to whom she was everything and who to her was not all.

"Don't, Red!" she said, all the bars of her pretense down, and dodging from his eyes rather than any move he made toward her. "Don't, Red! Don't!" And began to whisper in the unbeautifulness of fear, becoming strangely smaller as her pallor mounted. He was as terrible and as swarthy and as melodramatic as Othello. "Don't, Red," she called still again, and it was as if her voice came to him somewhere from across a bog.

He was standing with one knee dug into the couch, straining her head back against the wall, his head on her forehead and the beautiful flexing arch of her neck rising—swanlike.

"Watch out!" There was a raw nail in the wall where a picture had hung. Murphy had kept knocking it awry, and she had removed it. "Watch out, Red—no—no—"

Through the star-spangled red, he glimpsed her once where the hair swept off her brow and for the moment, to his blurred craziness, it was as if through the red her brow was shotted with little pock-marked scars and a hot surge of unaccountable sickness fanned the enormous silence of his rage.

With or without his knowing it, that raw nail drove slowly home to the left rear of Winnie's ear upward toward the cerebellum as, tilted and tilted, and the convex curve of her neck mounted like a bow stretched outward.

There was little about Jason's trial to entitle it to more than a back-page paragraph in the dailies. He sat through those days, that were crisscrossed with prison-bars, much like those drowned figures encountered by deep-sea divers, which, seated upright in death, are pressed down by the waters of unreality.

It is doubtful if he spoke a hundred words during the lean, celled weeks of his waiting and then with a vacuous sort of apathy and solely upon advice of counsel. Even when he took the stand, undramatically, his voice without even a plating of zest for life, was like some old drum with the parchment too tired to vibrate.

Women, however, cried over him and the storms in his eyes and the curiously downy back of his neck where the last of his youth still marked him.

To Sara, from her place in the first row, on those not infrequent occasions when his eyes fumbled for hers, he seemed to drown in her gaze—back—somewhere—

He was as cornered as a stag whose head is up even as it crouches and as the sordid weeks of his reckoning were to their close, and brackets of the fatigue of nervousness had begun to spring out around the judge's mouth, and his slightly gray, slightly bald head to lean achingly, the immutability of the prisoner at the bar became broodingnagian as a mountain's indifference to the littleness of weather.

On a Friday at high noon, the jury adjourned, the judge charging it with a solemnity that rang up to wise old rafters and down into one woman's thirsty soul like life-giving waters. In part, he told the twelve men about to file out:

"If there has been anything in my atti-

tude during the recital of the defendant's story, which has appeared to you to be in the slightest manner prejudiced one way or another, I charge you to strike such mistaken impressions from your minds.

"I have tried honestly to wash the slate of my mind clean to take down faithfully the aspects of this case which for two weeks has occupied this jury.

"If you believe the defendant guilty of the heinous crime in question, do not falter in your use of the power with which the law has vested you. If, on the other hand and to the best of your judgment, there has been in the defendant's life extenuating circumstances, or—a limitation of environment, home influence, close not the avenues of your fair judgment.

"Did this man in the kind of—er—a—frenzy he describes and to which witnesses agree he was subject, deliberately strain back the Ross woman's head until the nail penetrated?"

"If so, remember the law takes knowledge only of self-defense.

"On the other hand, ask of yourselves well, did the defendant, in the frenzy, which he claims had hold of him when he committed this unusual crime, know that the nail was there?"

"Would Winnie Ross have met her death if the nail had not been there?"

"Gentlemen, in the name of the law, solemnly and with a fear of God in your hearts, I charge you."

It was a quick verdict. Three hours and forty minutes.

"Not Guilty."

In the front row there with the titillating folderols on her bonnet and her hand at her throat as if she would tear it open for the mystery of the pain of the heart beat in it, Sara Simkovitz heard, and, hearing, swooned into the pit of her pain and her joy.

Her son, with the brackets of fatigue out about his mouth, was standing over her when she opened her eyes. The look of crucifixion close to the fore of them.

"Ma," he said, pressing her head close to his robes of state and holding a throat-straining quiver under his voice, "I—I shouldn't have let you stay. It was too-much for you."

It took her a moment for the mist to clear.

"I—son—did somebody strike? Hit? Strange. I—I must have been hurt. Son, am I bleeding?" And looked down clasp- ing her hand to the bosom of her decent black silk basque. "Son, I—it was a good verdict, not? I—couldn't have stood it—if it wasn't. I—something—it was good, not?"

"Yes, ma. Yes."

"Don't—don't let that boy get away, son. I think—those tempers—I can help—him. You see. I know—how to handle—somehow, I—"

"Yes, ma; only, now you must sit quietly—"

"Promise me, son, you won't let that boy get away. I must help him."

"Yes, yes, ma; only, please—quiet—now."

You see the judge was very tired, and looking down at the spot where her hand still lay at her bosom as if to press down a hurt, the red of her same obsession shook and shook him.

Somehow it seemed to him, too, that her dear heart was bleeding.

How To Keep Your Child's Hair Beautiful

What a Mother can do to keep her Child's Hair
Beautiful, Healthy and Luxuriant

THE beauty of your child's hair depends largely upon the care you give it. Shampooing it properly is always the most important thing.

It is the shampooing which brings out the real life and lustre, natural wave and color, and makes their hair soft, fresh and luxuriant.

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When the hair has been shampooed properly, and is thoroughly clean, it will be glossy, smooth and bright, delightfully fresh-looking, soft and silky.

While children's hair must have frequent and regular washing to keep it beautiful, it cannot stand the harsh effect of ordinary soaps. The free alkali in ordinary soaps soon dries the scalp, makes the hair brittle and ruins it.

That is why discriminating mothers use Mulsified Coconut Oil Shampoo. This clear, pure and entirely greaseless product cannot possibly injure and it does not dry the scalp or make the hair brittle, no matter how often you use it.

If you want to see how really beautiful you can make your child's hair look, just

Follow This Simple Method

FIRST, wet the hair and scalp in clear, warm water. Then apply a little Mulsified Coconut Oil Shampoo, rubbing it in thoroughly all over the scalp and throughout the entire length, down to the ends of the hair.

Two or three teaspoonfuls will make an abundance of rich, creamy lather. This should be rubbed in thoroughly and briskly with the finger tips, so as to loosen the dandruff and small particles of dust and dirt that stick to the scalp.

When you have done this, rinse the hair and scalp thoroughly, using clear, fresh, warm water. Then use another application of Mulsified.

Two waters are usually sufficient for washing the hair; but sometimes the third is necessary. You can easily tell, for when the hair is perfectly clean, it will be soft and silky in the water.

Rinse the Hair Thoroughly

THIS is very important. After the final washing the hair and scalp should be rinsed in at least two changes of warm water and followed with a rinsing in cold water.

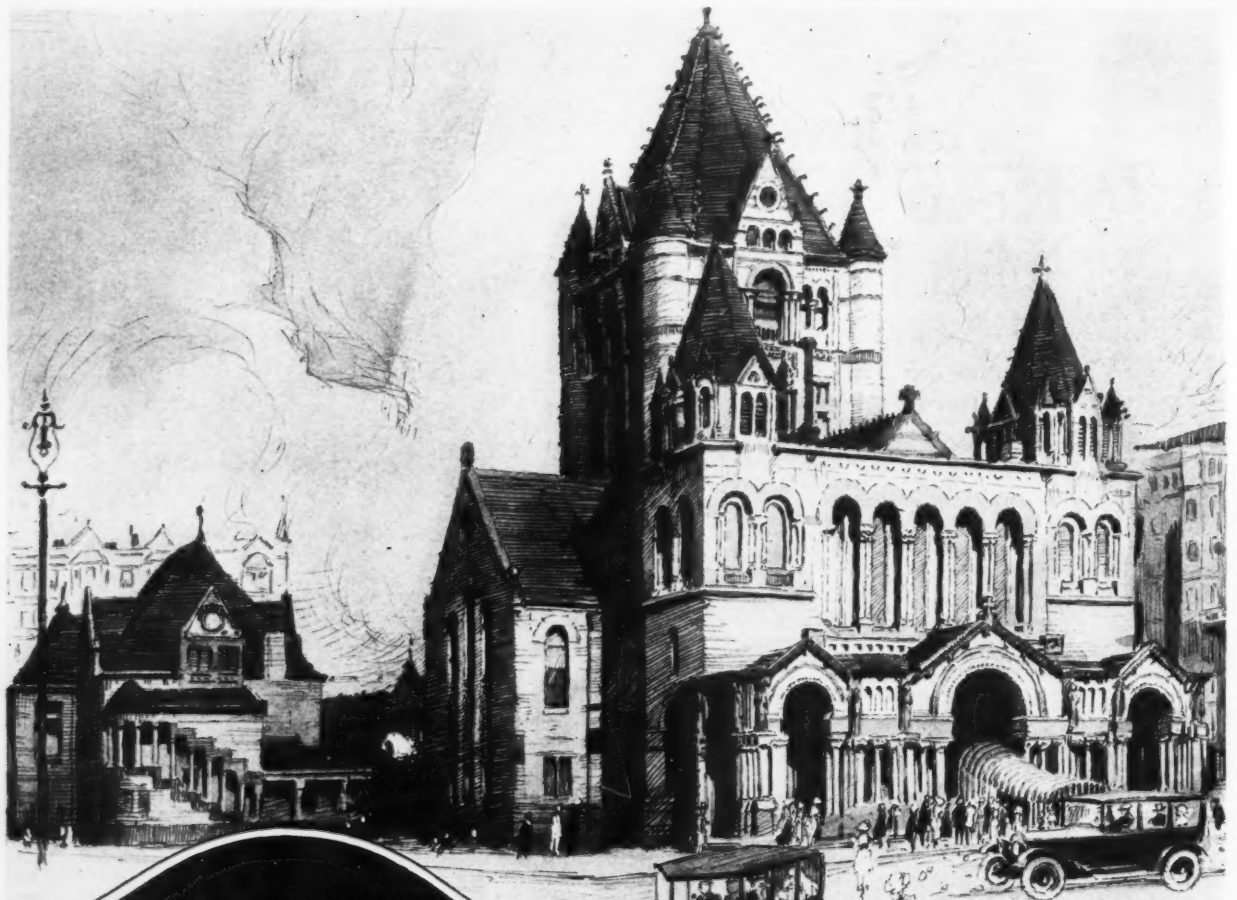
After a Mulsified Shampoo you will find the hair will dry quickly and evenly and have the appearance of being much thicker and heavier than it is.

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—Macrobius

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Revelling in this same old wedding sentiment, the bride of today wears a band of platinum deeply chased with the blossoms of the orange, enhanced perhaps by the added brilliancy of flawless diamonds.

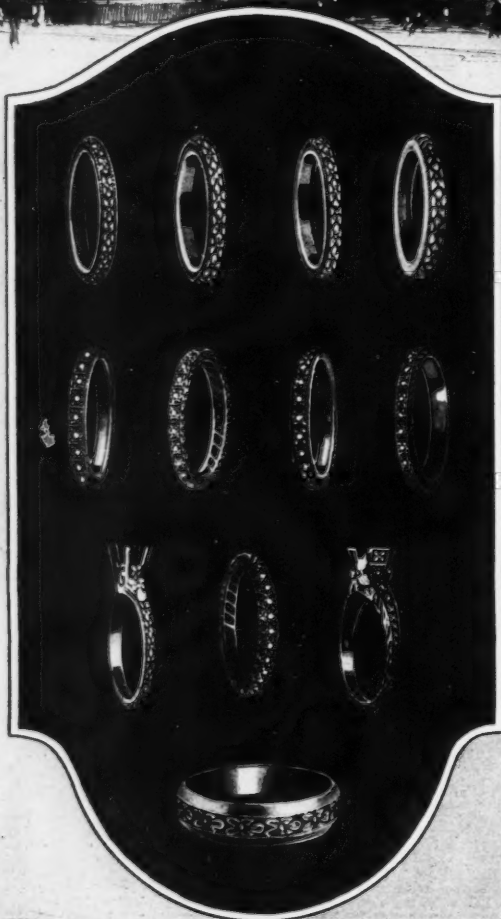
Whatever her choice may be, she wears the utmost in wedding rings for both are the final expression of modern beauty and legendary sentiment. Traub Orange Blossom Rings which have swept into universal approval are pictured and described in our exquisitely charming brochure of romance and legend, "Wedding Ring Sentiment," of which a copy will be sent upon request.

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TRAUB ORANGE BLOSSOM RINGS



Ku-hà-va Days

(Continued from page 29)

forms the fifty-mile link between seacoast and the government post at Panda. Even so, one had the feeling of letting go a breath held for weeks as, in the early morning, forty-six porters, mostly strapping women, lined up to take our loads in the vast compound of the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association which recruits and sends fifty thousand "boys" a year to the Transvaal mines. The war, with its flood of back pay to conscripted natives, coupled with vagaries of exchange and of paper money, had played havoc with the humble profession of carrier. Hardly an able-bodied man could be persuaded to take a burden, and where, six years ago, a hunting safari would have scorned to number a single woman in its paid ranks, to-day he who travels by load and carry is lucky to get away with enough men to bring in meat for the camp—an office never performed by women save in the case of elephant, when the whole population of a district, men, women, and children, turn out as by one accord.

The wide-spread illusion as to which is the weaker sex evaporates rapidly as you lift the hem of the veil of Africa. It goes without saying that women should fetch wood and water and till the soil, but go to the tail-end of the safari toward the close of a long march and you will find them carrying the heaviest loads uncomplainingly, the male stalwarts whom you had picked for the job walking along burdenless until within a few hundred yards of camp. Nor is this the limit of the women's physical measure. Among the six tribes of the Shangaan nation at least, it is the women who get up the dances, who clap and sing by the hour while the boys and men perform in groups, and who, when everyone else is tired out, enter the ring, first in fours and couples according to age, and finally bring the celebration to the low level of an orgy by executing a series of *pas seuls* never surpassed on the Amsterdam Roof. From first to last, the women are the inciters and the unwearied stayers, the men the possessors of what modesty there is.

It was a suspicion of this truth which gave the march from the coast to Panda a tinge of false color. There are safaris and safaris, but the safari whose avowed object is the pursuit of big game is a very special affair, bound by rules which have been ingrained in the tribal life of Africa through many generations and perhaps for centuries. Generally speaking, the white man is considered immune from the innumerable tabus of the black, but sooner or later little mysteries which puzzle lift a corner here and there, giving him a glimpse of some traditional rock on which his purpose crashed and went awry. These mysteries are never wholly learned; they come slowly to light with the growth of mutual confidence coupled with unflagging observation, and each misty revelation opens so small a door on the vast intricacy of the native cosmos that one bows to the justice of that most ancient saying: "Out of Africa always something new."

It was a relief to find that, through the good offices of the governor-general, the administration at Panda, in addition to summoning the three famous trackers of

the district, had corralled enough men carriers to enable us to pay off all our women. The official rate for the work they had done was one escudo, which, at the exchange of the day, amounted in American money to twenty cents for a fifty-mile carry. We paid them triple wages, turned them loose in a body, and proceeded to enroll the men of the country, a totally different type from the "boys" of the nearby coast. We took on thirty-two, lined them up, and when the starting-whistle blew, it was a joy to see them rush for the loads, two of them fighting over an ammunition-box long after they had felt its weight. They were safari-trained, and they fought over the box, not because it was small but because they knew what it contained and felt that he who carried it was only one step below the angels, those crowned heads in the hierarchy of the expedition who carried no burden save a loaded gun and a cartridge-bag.

After only two hours' delay, we sent the safari ahead in mid-afternoon, with orders to camp as far afield as they could get before dark, and then held our first indaba under the shade of a great cashew tree, with Magudogudo, Madada, and Maoia, old friends, tried trackers and hunters of the first water in their own right. Magudogudo was a big man in the native eye, the possessor of seven wives, and the nearest lineal descendant to the great Gungunyane, last of the kings who made war on a large scale against the Portuguese. Following established policy, it was necessary to introduce my shooting-mate with some formality as a chief of no mean proportions in his own country, to enlarge upon the extent of his establishment and the hordes at his beck and call, and to tell the truth as to his prowess with the rifle. Magudogudo was to hold him in his special care, work for him as he had never worked before, show him all the long list of major game which haunted the margins of the Inhasune, the Nyagulaze, the Nyamekelengue, the Nyampala-pala, and the Inhawalungo until we reached the far banks of the Chicome and receive his commensurate reward, not in paper but in clinking gold, as befitted an enterprise between chiefs.

To my own lot fell Madada, a man full-grown now, but who, as a straight youth, had won his accolade as a master hunter in my company seven years before. He welcomed me with a gleam in his eye which was warmer and more intimate than a hand-shake. His stories were my stories. In the long months which had intervened, he had gone back in narrative by many a camp-fire to scenes and feats which we held in common. It did not surprise him that I had returned; lions still roared on the plains round Miquel; elephants still plowed their way through a dozen tangled forests, and as for meat for the camp in the shape of waterbuck, wildebeest, sable, and eland, where they wandered they wrote their telltale name. He introduced his father, Maoia, a quiet veteran of sixty, who held a hoary record of five elephants with an old-style Martini rifle, and who was to carry my second gun during nearly two months of grueling work.

The retinue and paraphernalia of an African safari seem cumbersome and all but incomprehensible to the lonely huntsman of the Maine woods with his pack and single guide, or to the man who takes an outfit of a few horses and a couple of Indians into the wilds of the Northwest for the full length of the season; but there is no detail in all the apparent pomp and circumstance which has not a solid utilitarian or essential foundation. African shooting is unlike that of all other continents in that it is linked to treacheries of climate, of beast, and of native superstition; sun, fever, and lions are alone enough to give it a rich tone of its own, but the sane precautions that one takes against these accustomed features are as nothing before the myriad little lessons which the white men of three generations have accumulated toward the comfort and well-being of those who follow the big-game trail. Far more than in any other country, the success of an expedition hangs on facilities for prompt recuperation of the physical force expended and for the up-keep of individual morale and prestige. The very touches which in the West would earn the name of "dude outfit," and proclaim a man a tenderfoot or a sybarite at large, here mark him for a veteran. The old-timer calls for tea in a loud voice at the end of the thirstiest day, and, having scalded his throat, never omits his evening bath which is also as hot as flesh will stand; he changes everything he has on, demands of his cook as good a four-course dinner as he ever ate at home and tops it with five grains of quinine. After a pipe and a nightcap, he retires to his tent, draws the mosquito-curtains, tucks them under the sill, weights them down, sews them if necessary and then, however sleepy he may be, turns on his electric torch and hunts religiously the most dangerous game in Africa, the tiny anopheles mosquito. If he omits any one of these ceremonies, he is looked upon as a fool and a shirker.

Even sheer ostentation has its advantages in a society which is the last as it was the first word in snobism. For the white man as an individual, the black has no respect whatever. His assistance, homage, and the amount of provisions which will appear in camp for purchase are in exact ratio to the size of the *mulungu's* following, personal retinue, and equipage. The professional hunter who travels with a skeleton outfit or the white man who goes astray in the bush gets scant help and no food from the Shangaans he encounters. He is shown an empty pot and greeted with a singsong refrain as meek as it is musical, and so cynical as to be amusing when it isn't maddening to a hungry stomach. "Ku-hà-va," murmurs the native brazenly amid a pestering flock of chickens, which phrase, being translated, will have a familiar sound to American ears. It means, "That's all there is; there isn't any more."

Aside from these justifications for a large and well-appointed safari, it should be remembered that it takes from six to fourteen men to bring into camp the meat of a single antelope and that fifty have all they can do to strip the tusks and trophies



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from an elephant in twenty-four hours. It is a fact that the marches within the hunting-area are usually short, but it is equally true that one invariably wishes to move rapidly and that light loads are the surest road to quick comfort.

The outfit which we took into the Inhasune valley left Panda fifty-three strong and numbered seventy at the end of six weeks' shooting but at no time was it cumbersome. To see it on the march, one would have said that such a heterogeneous gathering could not possibly settle down to order in the course of a night, much less fulfil its mission of providing comfort at short notice to those who were footing the bill. As a matter of fact, however, it took only thirty minutes at each arrival to transform itself from apparent chaos into the replica in the rough of a well-appointed home. The explanation is that, once a site was chosen, every detail in the intricate business of settling down was performed simultaneously. It was the office of ten of the coast carriers to clear the ground of sticks, weeds, and leaves as clean as a swept floor, and set two many-branched saplings for hat- and clothes-racks; of twenty of the Panda men to build outhouse and bath and clear a path to each; of the two tent-boys, who acted as foremen on the march, to set the tents and the dining-room and kitchen flies; of the mess-captains among the porters to fetch wood for the entire camp and put their own pots to boil; of the cook to start his fire; of the two personal servants to make the beds, get ready the bath, and a change of clothing; of the horse-boys to look after their charges and, finally, of Magudogudu and Madada to use their authority with their own and the women of the near-by kraal to fetch an unlimited supply of water.

The hurly-burly of this multifarious performance seldom lasts for half an hour; yet so spoiled is the African traveler that even this short interim between activity and comfort fills him with impatience, in spite of the fact that hammock-chairs and tables are the first of all the loads to be thrown open for his use. As the camp takes form rapidly before his eyes, serenity returns, and he emerges quite suddenly into complete peace when he finds grouped about him in intensive formation every necessity and many of the luxuries of life. On the rack within easy reach hang hat, coat, water-bottle, field-glass, camera, mosquito-boots, a suit of pajamas, and a loaded gun; on the table before him stand steaming teapot, glasses, and a cool bottle waiting to crown the long, hot day with a first drink. At his side is the precious secretary-bag which contains a skeleton pharmacopœia, toilet accessories, writing-materials, housewife, and a thousand dollars in five varieties of cash. If there is anything that has been forgotten, he has only to shout for it, and whoever is responsible will come running to show him that it is where it ought to be—under his nose.

The white man is master, but he is the apex of a hierarchy as established as the pyramids of Egypt. Let him try to introduce a single innovation destructive of the basic formation, such, for instance, as decreeing that there being an extra porter, a woman shall go burdenless, and the world he happens to be sojourning in will simply cease revolving. The order of

precedence in the distribution of consideration, remuneration, and, above all, of food is unalterable. First the *mulungu*, then his horse and his personal servants headed by the cook; after that the trackers, the gun-bearers, the local hunt-boy, the local chief, the tent-boys, the horse-boys, the porters, and, finally, the women hangers-on, wives of a privileged few and those who are conscripted at each camp as water-carriers.

The safari moved out from Panda too late to get us on the actual shooting-ground, but advanced near enough to make the next day's carry a short one. At the end of it, we camped on the edge of a vast plain dotted with wide stretches of the milala palm, broken frequently by blots of sparse forest, close-set in the distance, but quite open underfoot as one approached. Long before dawn, the aching anticipation of the first shooting-day had us afoot. We ate, tossed a coin for position, and at the first gray light started out along diverging lines.

At ten o'clock, my heart bounced immediately to the top notch of exhilaration at a low whistle, a pause, and the whispered word "*Kongoni!*"

Tracker, local guide, the horse, horse-boy, and old Maoia in the rear with the second gun stood as though carved in rock. I turned my head slowly and saw a troop of wildebeest like dots of ink against the lighter background of a far-away clump of trees. As I slipped from my horse, the men sank slowly to their haunches beneath the level of the grass-tops; Madada took the wind with a pinch of dust, found it unfavorable, and, bent double, started out swiftly along a line of cover. I followed closely on his heels, and after a long detour we threaded the wood before which the game had been standing, only to find that it had got the wind of the outfit we had left behind and gone away. Nothing daunted, Madada took up the easy spoor and followed it at a four-mile clip. An hour passed, and still we were on the deep indentations of a galloping trail. Knowing wildebeest to be both lazy and curious, we were puzzled, and only late that night were we to learn that Cass had fired the single shot of a first long day at this same wary bunch.

We were discouraged and on the point of sitting down to wait for the horse when Madada's form went suddenly rigid with his head turned half to the right. His lips formed the word: "*Pala-pala!*"

Following the direction of his glance into the shadows of a scattered wood, for a moment I saw nothing; then suddenly realized that I was staring a sable antelope in the face at not over a hundred yards. The animal stood slant-legged, half squatting, as a horse does at the instant before he whirls. Its head was held low; showing the mighty sweep of the scythelike horns, and its eyes stared weirdly from behind the two patches of dazzling white which streaked its jet-black face. I threw up my gun, aimed, and was about to press the trigger when Madada, trained even against the strong pull of native greed for fresh meat, murmured dutifully, "*Aicona le madoda*"—"That's not the bull," and even as he whispered, the wood became alive with plunging forms that faded away almost instantaneously, leaving the impression of a single flash of black and white.

We took up the new spoor and followed it at so swift a pace that we came up on the band while they were still moving, and, the discovery being mutual and simultaneous, the sable went away again on another long spurt. Madada was showing the persisting fault of his youth; being an amazingly expert tracker, he could read a spoor that was all but invisible to others at astonishing speed, and when on such an open road as is made by wildebeest, eland, or sable, it was almost impossible to get him to slow down to a crawl before running into the quarry. Being admonished to go "gashly," in the selfsame words used time and again in years gone by, he nodded his head sadly and once more we took up the long stern chase through wood, milala-palm flats, and dipping vleis until at the high heat of the day we came out on a vast sweep of rolling country and saw the herd grazing at three hundred yards with not a feather of cover in between. Even in the open, it was impossible for me to distinguish the bull from his harem of thirty long-horned cows until Madada picked him out by his slightly darker coat.

It was a hopelessly long shot for a near-sighted man, but it had to be tried, and we both listened disconsolately to the unmistakable high song of a bullet that goes over and away. Once more the sable traveled, and this time in dead earnest. I sat down on an ant-hill in the half-shade of an izonzo tree, took out my stalking-glass and watched the closely bunched, galloping herd rise and fall, rise and fall in a steadily diminishing blur, until the far horizon cut it definitely from view.

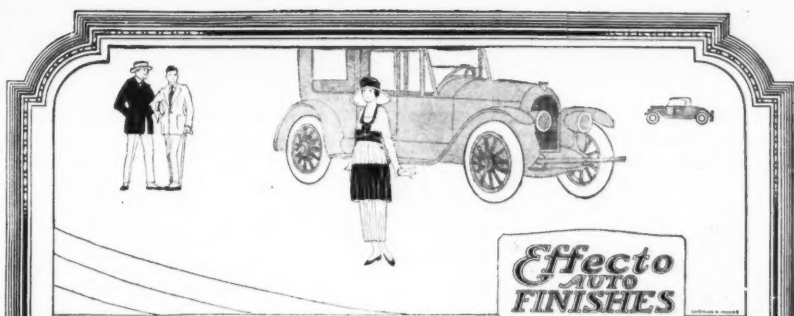
"What's the matter with the game this year?" I asked Madada.

"Lion," he answered promptly, and went on to tell of such a plague of lions as had not been heard of in those parts for many a day.

Lunch, water-bottle, and even smokes had been left behind with the horse, and after waiting half an hour in vain, we made our way to a nearby kraal and stretched our tired limbs under the welcome deep shadow of a mafureira. There were no men at home, only women, and after a single glance at us, they went steadily about their outdoor housekeeping.

We think of Africa as being populated by a more or less homogeneous mass of black races, and nothing could be further from the truth. Through many districts, every tribe, almost every kraal, is a separate ant-hill built on the foundation of self-interest and communal property, and all single-taxers and enemies of individual vested rights are invited to inspect an experiment which has gone on for more centuries than history records.

Woven into the very fiber of this infinitely divided social fabric, one finds the idea of women not as chattel, as is so generally supposed, but as the inalienable property of the family. Woman is a slave pure and simple in the common acceptance of the term, but she is not subject to barter unless she or her parents were taken in battle. In other words, once sold, she can be inherited but never bought. She is at once coveted and despised, treasured and abused, humored and worked to death, and yet she does not inspire pity or does it occur to her to pity herself. The reason is that woman as an



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essence is as irrepressible as she is universal; even wearing the chain and ball of African usage, she remains the background of almost every law, custom, and rite as well as the sinister motive in almost every dance and song. Catching her eye, one either senses or imagines a smoldering gleam that jeers at man and all his domineering ways and takes actual pride in an appearance of humility sheathing the scythe-like claw of sex.

Such weighty thoughts did not prevent thirst from increasing with every passing moment of the hot noon-hour until I threw caution to the winds and took a long drink of water, unboiled and unfiltered but cool, from a leaf-covered Kafir pot. The sight of Madada munching mandioc roasted in the embers of a near-by fire woke the pangs of hunger, and commandeering the next slim root he fished from the ashes, I peeled the crisp skin and filled my stomach with the bread which in many districts is the staff of African as well as of South American life. Feeling reinforced and remembering the meatless camp, we started out again and made into the wind, irrespective of how far that course might lead us from home.

It was confusing to a mind which thought it knew all the rules for shooting in the Inhasune country and subscribed with many another man's to the theory that one should complete one's morning hunt by ten and supplement it by a three-hour turn in the afternoon, to find that dogged spooring was to be the order of the day. Furthermore, weary, footsore, and longing for tobacco, it was highly disconcerting to recall certain things said to Cass and emphasized about the marvelous tracking powers of the horse-boy—how you could travel where you would, even through the endless sea of gray elephant bush or the apparently impassable barrier of the thickets in which lion are wont to lay up in daytime, and find horse, local guide, and the accessories of comfort in their charge at your beck and call almost before the echo of a shot had died away.

Once more Madada came upon a moderately fresh spoor, this time of waterbuck, and we were off at his accustomed swinging pace. We crossed a corner of the vast plain over which the sable had disappeared into the hazy distance and entered a lovely region of park-like country broken by blots of domed trees which, upon approach, opened a succession of vistas one so like another that each seemed an exact replica of all its predecessors; yet one had the sensation of following a lane with many turnings. Who knew it, on rounding the next promontory of towering shadow, we should not come upon some moist dip amid the unbroken expanse of the level prairie where game would be congregated in one of those unforgettable group-pictures never seen by this generation save in the faintly scratched wilds of Africa?

The sun was fast sinking in the west; it was five o'clock, and at half-past the shooting-light would cease almost as though at the ringing of a gong, precluding inexorably overtime work for huntsman or

tracker. I began to think disconsolately of the miles and miles we were from camp—sixteen, at the very least—and of the empty-handed foot-sogging they would entail. My eyes had almost lost interest in the disheartening stillness of the wilderness and were fastened automatically on Madada's heels when he stopped so suddenly that it was difficult to avoid a collision with his back. We stood on the verge of a large shallow basin in the center of which was a pool veiled by high reeds and sentinelled by a single giant crane. Not two hundred yards away, a scattered herd of heavy-shouldered wildebeest gazed at us curiously while three awkward reedbuck galloped across their rear, uttering their shrill, weird, whistling cry.

I threw up my gun and was taking aim when ear and eye caught the rush and the blur of a great gray form on my left. The rifle swung swiftly, almost as though by its own instinct, until it covered the new mark. The crack of the shot seemed to telescope into the plug! of the bullet as it found its mark, so nearly simultaneous were the two sounds. The plunging quarry, a fine bull waterbuck, slowed suddenly to a staggering walk and sank to his knees, shot mortally through the thick of the shoulder. Where the wildebeest herd had been standing was only a cloud of dust, golden yellow in the light of the sinking sun. Along the far rim of the vlei, the reedbuck still galloped, and in mid-air the crane towered high and then, with his long legs pointing back like a rudder, drifted lazily off in a straight descending line.

"Pivo," said Madada, with a greedy grin as he gazed at the fat round rump of the fallen waterbuck.

We measured the horns and found them not a record by some inches, but still fairly representative and beautifully symmetrical, which is as much as can be hoped for nowadays when one shoots not only against the accumulated efforts of hunters of three generations but against the thousands of heads of various game picked up by natives during the decimation of the rinderpest and subsequently sold to collectors and published at the head of statistical lists to the discouragement of all true sportsmen. I traced the lines of incision for the removal of the mask, and emphasized as always the cut far back on the shoulders to get plenty of flap.

"I know; I know," murmured Madada again and again, and finally looked at me reproachfully and asked, "Have you forgotten?" and I laughed at myself for trying to teach him anything about skinning a head. He fell to work.

"Le hanshi—the horse," he said presently without glancing up.

Of all the surprises of the varied day, this was the most welcome, that one should lock up to see horse, horse-boy, local guide, and old Maoia approaching at leisurely pace on the spoor they had been doggedly following since ten o'clock in the morning. Here was vindication coming with its arms full of warm gifts to shame faint-hearted faith. In the calm which follows swiftly on success after long suspense, it was easy

to measure the eager speed at which we had been working the various spoors of the day and to realize that at its worst the outfit had hardly been an hour in the rear. On the great plain we had crossed just after the noontide rest, had we looked back, we would have seen it trailing us at its proper distance across the open.

A chill was already in the air, though the sun was not quite set. I slipped on my coat, mounted, and lighted my pipe with such feelings as only the thoroughly initiated in all the sensations of the veldt can appreciate. Madada explained that we were but a few hundred yards from Magudogudo's kraal, to which we were to move camp on the following day, and Rungo, the horse-boy, declaring that he could find his way home without assistance, it was decided that tracker and the local guide should stay by the waterbuck, strip the mask, and protect the meat against the attack of hyenas and lesser scavengers.

Evening fell upon us as we started out, Rungo's slim, swift figure in the lead, Maoia bringing up the rear. The horse I rode was a rangy, milk-white gelding named Hawthorne. Moving evenly through the darkness above the tops of the short dry grass, his snowy body must have seemed a ghostly apparition to the denizens of the wilds and presently from all sides began to sound the shrill, rasping whistle of startled and curious reedbuck. The familiarity of that cry had haunted me from its first hearing years ago. What was it like? Why did it strike the chord of home and childhood? Now, in the concentration of the senses which comes to one among velvety shadows under starlit skies, it suddenly disclosed itself as first cousin to the jeering call of the barnyard catbird. No sooner was the discovery made than the chorus ceased as if it had accomplished its object.

A palpable stillness fell upon us and seemed to spread and spread through the night.

Only he who has been foster-cradled in the saddle knows to the full the rest it can bring to limbs bone-tired from all-day walking. To puff luxuriously at one's pipe and sway more and more drowsily to the even undulations of Hawthorne's swinging stride was to feel peace and happiness descend like a warm mantle as though to put the soul to sleep and tuck it in for the night. Already the day, which during the anxious course of its many blank hours had seemed like a monstrous disillusionment, began to take on the mark of a great red letter under the touch of the selective alchemy of memory.

Wildebeest in the distance, the black-and-white flash of sable antelope, the rocking-horse gallop of reedbuck, and the satisfying climax of the fallen waterbuck crowded to the fore in vision and blotted out all the emptinesses of the wilderness. Mile after mile drifted by pleasantly on the bosom of the vast silence.

The horse-boy Rungo grunted. Ahead was the calling gleam of the far-away lights of camp.

"Three out of five of the African wildebeest are killed because of their abnormal curiosity," states Mr. Chamberlain, in describing the methods he employed in stalking his prey. In *June Cosmopolitan* he tells of his successful pursuit of this fantastic "buffoon of the plains"—a series of remarkable adventures in big-game hunting that are all the more exciting because they are true.

The Spirit of the Sightseer

(Continued from page 69)

stuttered. He had the most enthralling stutter I have ever heard. In the army in France it is said that officers camped on his trail, and that on the transport home, he was lifted bodily from below decks and transported permanently to the officers' mess. He had been to "Mo-mo-monte Ca-ca-ar-lo," and now he was with us.

So Bucko, who was the most genial of persons, would see a prairie-dog and try to indicate the fact to the people in his car.

"T-t-t-there g-g-goes a p-p-p-hell, it's gone!"

And at last we reached Keams Cañon, and at the side of the desert valley parked our cars. Further along in the cañon there was an Indian school, and the next day, when it was too late, we learned of an empty dormitory where we might have slept. But we did not know. There was a well of good water, and for the moment that sufficed. It did not take the place of beds, naturally, but we now knew that when the desert traveler has a trading-post for sardines, cheese, crackers, and canned fruit, and has besides a well of water, he has the desert luxuries.

By the waters of Babylon (Keams Cañon), therefore, we sat down and wept. Not precisely, of course, but there was a small drop in our morale. The evening was cool and getting cooler. The trader had closed the store and was eating his supper, and from the house there came the soft, insidious aroma of frying meat and boiling coffee!

Then Howard and the drivers held a consultation. We emptied our cars, and piled on the desert sand our Lares and Penates, our dolls and baskets and pottery and suitcases, and the drivers started back at a breakneck pace for such necessities as they could bring.

Things began to brighten. Some one built a camp-fire. The Banker's wife borrowed the trader's stove and a coffee-pot, and made a great pail of coffee. And—oh, frabjous day, as Lewis Carroll would say—came the usual angel of the tourist in the Indian reservation, the school superintendent, and whispered something in my ear. He could not take the party, but he could take me, and a gentleman I am related to by marriage, and give us bedroom and bath.

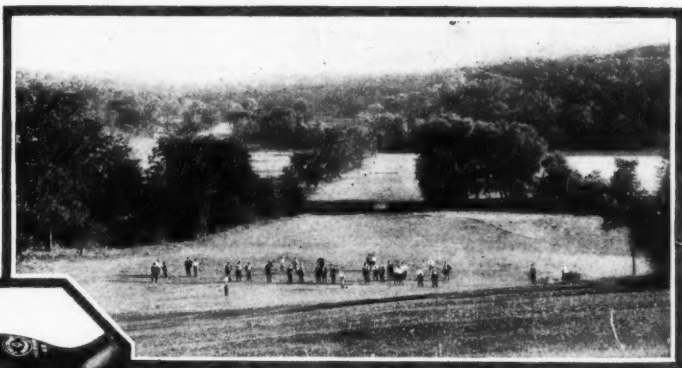
Sometime I shall write an ode to that man and to his wife, to their chairs to sit in, and their tub to bathe in, and their beds to sleep in. I dare say I am softening. Time was when I held less strongly to the bodily comforts, but that time is gone.

We stole away. It were but cruelty to flaunt our good fortune. And late that night came back the cars, after a frenzied journey, bringing tents and bedding and food for breakfast. As there were no tent-poles, however, the tents were laid on the ground, and under their canvas tops crept the desert caravanners, to sleep and perchance to dream.

The next morning we stepped unwitting into quiet tragedy.

From the reservation that day a hundred children, Navajo and Hopi, were to be sent to California to school, there to remain for a period of years. Twenty-one children

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had already been brought in. They were grouped together in the school-administration building, all ages and all emotions, smiling, weeping, stoical. And outside, sitting huddled in their blankets on a concrete wall, were such figures of grief as I never hope to see again.

Sad-faced victims of civilization, unable to grasp what lay beyond this enforced separation, seeing in it only something akin to the slaughter of the first-born, they neither moved nor spoke.

To our caravan, usually a matter of eager interest, they scarcely lifted their eyes. Men and women, they crouched and waited, as one waits for a death in the house.

The Cañon de Chelly (pronounced Shay) was fifty-seven miles away. It was seventy-five miles away. It was one hundred and fifty miles away. And by persistence we had obtained enough gasoline to take us ninety miles. Between Keams Cañon and the Cañon de Chelly there was nothing. Nothing, that is, but desert. Part of the way there was not even a trail.

Afterward, we learned of another route, shorter and well marked, but that day we were, after the trail turned off toward Gallup, a-sail on an uncharted sea.

Where the trail turned off toward Gallup, we stopped and lunched on sardines, crackers, cheese, and canned fruit. Then we left the trail and struck across the desert. But there was the problem of the trucks. How would they know where to leave the trail and strike off across the desert? We looked about for a stake, but that portion of the desert was completely wanting in stakes. It was, indeed, wanting in everything but the usual desert commodities—sand, sage-brush, sunburn, and solitude. However, we were developing certain qualities of ingenuity. One of the despised cracker-boxes was laid on the ground to indicate direction, and a strip from a pocket-handkerchief tied to the sage-brush, was to catch the drivers' eyes.

We had left the Hopis far behind, and were now in the Navajo country. The Hopi reservation is within the Navajo, and, we began to think, was a small oasis of pleasantness and kindness in a sea of suspicion. For the Navajo is not the Hopi. He is the nomad who drove the Hopi to their mountain fastnesses. The Navajo is a fighter, the Hopi a farmer. And the Navajo remains to-day less amenable to discipline, harder and more cruel, and certainly less pleasant than the Hopi. It is not hard to distinguish them. Both wear their hair in clubs on the nape of the neck; both wear the *banda* to confine it. But the Hopi, broader-faced, less aquiline, and shorter of stature, may also be known by the bobbing of the hair cut over his ears.

The desert had been growing even wilder and more beautiful. We took a tortuous way among buttes of red sandstone, and at last climbed a mesa over a road that would have been hard going for a horse. Below, but still miles away, was a green spot which marked the oasis of cottonwood trees at Chin Lee. Not that we were past our troubles. We lurched and swayed down into the bed of a dry river, followed it, climbed out like monstrous lumbering insects, and a half-hour later

reached the "hotel." Ninety miles, it was, from Keams Cañon.

It was not a hotel. It made no claim to being a hotel. And when Mr. Garcia, the young Mexican who ran the trading-post, found himself surrounded by a throng which wanted rooms, baths, drinking-water, beds, and food, all instantly, he simply threw up his hands. He had three or four extra rooms, but no facilities for food. And we were twenty-odd, and eight drivers.

We sat down in the store, on the steps outside, anywhere, and waited for we knew not what. We looked over the pawned jewelry, for every trading-post has its locked case containing quaint and beautiful pledges, bought rugs and bracelets, drank tepid pop, and—waited. There was nothing else to do. In a straight line a hundred miles of desert separated us from the railroad, and besides, we were out of gasoline. But more than that, the caves of the cliff-dwellers were all around us now, and we had come to discover the cliff-dwellers. We were in the center of the archeologist's delight.

It has been my experience that, when things on a camping-trip begin to go wrong, as they always do at least once, they go on almost to the breaking-point and then suddenly mend. They mended now, abruptly and completely, for Howard had been looking round, and he returned to make a little speech.

"Friends," he said, "round the corner of the butte is an Indian school. It is closed for the summer, but two saintly women and a miracle of a doctor have offered you beds" (cheers), "shower-baths" (loud cheers), "and hot food." (Wild and hysterical yelling, mutterings of coffee and such words as steak, potatoes and so on.)

The school opened two dormitories for us, one for men and one for women, and in a half-hour the green tank on the butte above was suffering a hemorrhage. Such splashing and washings, such grunts of ecstasy, such brushing and combing, and washing of pocket-handkerchiefs! And after that came supper, consisting, it is true, of hash made of canned corn beef, but good hash, baked beans, potatoes, and strong, hot coffee.

We were content. We did not care when the trucks came. We sat out on the front veranda of one of the buildings and ruminated, and far off, by the trading-post, a group of Indians sang. They sang, close-huddled, their faces turned toward the center. Their range was small, covering only six notes apparently, and the effect was weird and monotonous.

"Hi-o-ho, Anna!" it seemed to be, over and over.

The moon was full. It turned the sand-dunes to pale gold, and a lonely Navajo, loping homeward, into a Bedouin. Indeed, the Navajos have a sort of Arab aquilineity and gravity. A fierce and lawless tribe, predatory and acquisitive by nature, they have the best horses of all our Indians, are stock-breeders like the Arabs, and nomads like the Arabs, too, they put their art into the practical and portable form of blankets and rugs.

That night, a dozen women returned to their boarding-school days and undressed in a dormitory. On the pillows of the white-iron beds where had wept so many homesick Indian children, lay now the

permanent waves, the braids, and the patent curlers of the far East. And outside in the wash-room, from a leaking faucet, there sounded the cool drip of water.

The lights were off for the summer, and we had to use our electric torches. Came from a bed a sleepy voice:

"I've got on my new silk pajamas, and nobody can see them."

Instantly a dozen figures sat up. Instantly a dozen flash-lights were focused. "Stand up!" we commanded. The pajamas stood up on top of the bed. "Turn round! They're lovely. Now go to sleep and forget them."

The next day we saw our first cliff-dwelling.

On good horses we rode up the Cañon de Chelly. Fortunately, there had been no rain, and the cañon was safe. During wet weather it is filled with quicksand.

The Cañon de Chelly contains the White House, which must certainly be made a national monument if it is to be preserved. Not only should it be preserved, but it should be known and visited. A fair road from Gallup, New Mexico, makes it accessible, and because it is not on the beaten trail of the tourist, the visitor may become the discoverer, at any moment.

Ascent to the White House was difficult, impossible, indeed, without ropes. Clinging like cats, Tom and two or three of our men made a portion of the ascent, carrying a long weighted rope. After innumerable attempts, the weight slipped over an old timber and slid down at their feet. They went up the rope, hand over hand, while we watched enviously from below.

I have before me as I write what I am told is probably the rim of an ancient basket, but which I like to believe is part of an old bowstring. It is incredibly strong, and consists of vegetable fibers, wrapped with leather cut almost as fine as thread. One of the men picked it up inside the White House itself.

I did not see the mummy. An extra ride of sixteen miles did not appeal to me, and, besides, the wind was rising. Fine clouds of sand, whirling like waterspouts, danced along the bottom of the cañon, seeking, as is the way with sand, some haven of eye or ear or nose. Having lunched on sandwiches and coffee, I turned back, to ride slowly homeward. Such, at least, was my intention. But my horse was in a hurry. Head down against the sand, grazing the edges of cliffs and barking my shins against boulders, he cut that sand-storm like a knife.

Now and then I protested. I wished to examine the Indian paintings on the walls. I wanted to climb into an easy cliff-house and sit and think about being a cave-dweller. I wanted to recline behind some wall in my sanctuary and thumb my nose at my imaginary enemies. But the horse was in a hurry. I went home.

And home it really was. The trucks were in.

Now we had had, the night before, a dream. And this dream was that the trucks would come, and that we would set up our camp in the cottonwoods, and luxuriate for once in shade. We would hear the branches blow overhead in the wind and we would sleep on pine-needles, or whatever it is that cottonwoods shed.

But it was not to be. In Howard's



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absence, Jimmy had located the camp, and Jimmy's specialty was food, not romance. Over the last sand-dune I rode, and there, along the dusty road in front of the trading-post, shamelessly revealed to the traveling Indian eye, were our tents. Not even Jimmy's good supper that night quite restored him to favor.

The truck crews were weary, and Joe was exhausted. Jimmy, too, had borne the heat and burden of the day. So we stayed by the roadside, exposed to the public gaze, and thereafter the seekers for shade and leafy things carried over their playing-cards, their knitting, and their books, and listened to the stutterer, in an absorbed group under a tree, saying,

"G-g-give me t-t-t-t-three."

There had been, when I arrived at the camp from the cañon, a white sheep tied to a rear spring of one of the trucks—a nice woolly white sheep, which should have been on rollers. Later on, it disappeared, and that night we had boiled mutton for supper—boiled mutton, boiled potatoes, stewed fresh apples and fresh bread and butter. Perhaps I am overemphatic about food in these articles, but it is a vital matter for the desert camper.

The Navajos are polygamists, and five years ago, when a ruling was made against polygamy, they revolted, and troops were called out. However, on receiving permission to keep the wives they already possessed, the revolt died.

"What about divorce?" I asked Tom that night.

"Just separate," he said laconically.

"And can they marry again?"

"Sure!" he replied. "After time pick up somebody else."

The old marriage ceremony, still used but now followed by a legalized one, was simple enough, as Tom described it. It revolved round those close-woven baskets familiar to travelers in the west as marriage-baskets, and in which the design in color does not quite meet in one place.

The man sits in his hogan, with his own people on his right, the bride's on his left. The bride leaves her hogan, carrying corn mush before her in her marriage-basket. She puts a basin of water beside the basket on the floor, and then sits on the left side of the groom. Taking his right hand, she pours water on it and washes it. He then washes hers. After that, she takes the basket and, with the opening in the design to the East (all hogans face to the East) holds it before the man. He then, with a corn-tassel, makes lines through it, east to west and south to north. Both taste the mush, lifting it to their lips between the second and third fingers. He again makes the cross, and except for the lengthy advice of both fathers, the marriage is complete.

I like that ceremony. No bridesmaids or trousseau; no best man and ushers and ring and trunk; no checks and letters of thanks to worry about; no florist and no awning-company and no caterer. Just a bowl of corn-meal mush, which is easy to make, a basket, and two fathers. But wait a moment. There is something else. Unlike the Hopis, who buy their husbands, the Navajos buy their wives. They pay from four to twelve horses for them. And, after that they let them make a loom, and raise sheep and clean and spin the wool, and hunt round for vegetable dyes, and

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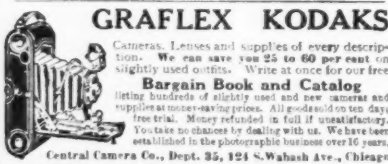
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become rug-weavers. As the lady exchanges the rugs for groceries for the family, perhaps she is cheap at even a dozen horses.

And such rugs as they can make! Out of the most sordid hogan there can come purities of white and colored wool, imagination of design, and accuracy of weaving that are amazing. And the pattern, remember, is carried in one small and not overtly head. As she works—and into it what dreams may she not weave?—she rolls up the finished portion and does not look at it again. She may not be able to count beyond her fingers, but her complicated design will be accurate to a thread.

Look closely at your Indian rugs. Go back of its place of purchase to this: a tiny hogan of mud and branches, alone and lost in a vast and cruel desert. Outside, in the sun, a crude loom, and before it a small and patient figure endlessly toiling. Not far away is the herd of sheep, the white for the white wool, the black for the black. Day after day the patient figure labors, putting into her work all her starved instinct for beauty, all the order and precision which has no place in her life. Follow her as, astride her horse, the blanket rolled behind her, she rides alone, bare-headed, over the hot and waterless trail, to receive the payment in not greatly more than the value of the wool. For rugs are sold by the pound. Her labor she does not count.

Let me quote here from my diary, written the next day.

"Have finished house-cleaning the tent, shaking sand out of blankets and camera, and brushing floor of tent with clothes-brush. Others have gone to Cañon del Muerto, where Kit Carson and others pursued a band of fugitive Indians, and where, according to Tom, the bloody hand-prints of the children yet remain. But even bloody hand-prints will not lure me into another saddle to-day.

"In the cook-tent, Jimmy is singing 'Juanita.' I don't know how he can sing, for we have no gasoline. In front of the trading-post, a row of Indians stares fixedly at the camp. I have bought a ring, but prices are going up—five dollars now instead of a dollar and a half.

"Earl has just bought a sheepskin at the post, for twenty cents, to mend a broken cushion."

Then I grew philosophical, evidently.

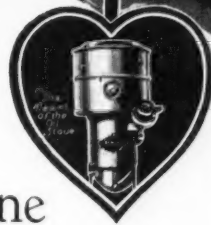
"This is a man's country. Women fade in it early. Indian women are either girls or old women. There is, for them, no placid middle age."

The differences between the Hopis and the Navajos are very curious—differences which no amount of propinquity ever changes. They are antagonistic always. They speak different tongues, and we were told the Hopis have no sign-language. The Navajos can not talk to them. The Hopi has preserved his own religion, but on the surface will only accept the Protestant Church. The Navajo also has his own religion, but accepts the Catholic faith.

It is doubtful if any Christian church makes any real impression on either of them, or indeed on any tribe. The virtues of the church may be taught them, but never entirely its faith. Secretly, if not in public, they still practise the rites of their forefathers, are nature- or sun-worshippers,



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and add the extra religion as they would a second blanket in the winter.

"If one god is good, two are better," said one of my Blackfeet to me.

Back to camp that afternoon rode a band of scarlet-faced, blistered, and utterly weary cliff-dwelling enthusiasts, who made thereon affidavit that the remainder of the party had suddenly gone mad, and had gone seven miles further.

I bow low before the indomitable spirit of the born sightseer. I would not go fourteen extra miles on a horse in a desert at a temperature over a hundred and twenty degrees in the sun for anything short of a bucket of ice.

Let me quote here from my diary:

"Matches are growing scarce. It is reported that Bucko" (the stutterer) "has won them all under the cottonwoods."

As no gasoline had as yet been freighted from Gallup, we prepared to settle down until it came. And now Tom began to show new and valuable qualities. Speak but the desire, and Tom clapped his hands, and it was done. So now, without knowing precisely what it was, we asked for a sand-painting.

Tom hesitated before he clapped his hands.

"It's lot of trouble," he said. "Medicine-men got to get up early and hunt colored stone. Then they grind up, hours and hours. And then they make picture. Must destroy picture same day, too."

We waited.

"Two dollar each person here, eh?" he inquired.

At the haste with which we agreed, his face fell. He saw that he could have made it three dollars. But he cheered later, mounted a horse, and rode away.

All the following day there was a quiet bustle going on at the medicine-lodge on a near-by mesa. Early in the morning, as Tom had said, went out the priests into the desert, to those places they knew of, and there found and brought in the minerals of many colors, to be ground to fine powder with infinite labor by hand. Then came the intricate process of the picture, a vast canvas of sand spread about on the floor of the medicine-lodge, and surrounded when finished by feathered prayer sticks.

At sunset, then, we went to the lodge, and walked into a scene that might have been in the Holy Land—the wide, bare spaces, the low-roofed house, and, watching us with wide calm eyes, a flock of sheep and goats with the shepherd crouching by a tiny fire. But even here came the dissensions and cupidity of man.

A tall priest was waiting. He spoke a little English, and he said,

"How much pay, you folks?"

Rapid calculation revealed that we had paid fifty dollars, and so we told him.

"Huh!" he said, "Tom he pay us fifteen!"

There was a time when battle seemed imminent, for Tom, when he appeared, was not inclined to come over. At last, however, he produced a huge roll of bills, peeled off the outer one, looked at it wistfully, and gave it up.

The ceremony proceeded.

Ceremony it was, for the Indians regard certain sand-paintings as highly curative,

and it appeared that their sense of thrift told them not to waste this one. The result was one of the most impressive rites I have ever seen.

One of the cars had brought over a sick Indian woman, and she was to be healed.

The medicine-lodge, neatly built of timber and adobe, was a circle of about thirty feet in diameter, with a round opening in the roof. On the flat earth floor beneath this opening was the sand-painting, some twelve feet each way, and of extraordinary beauty of color and design. Three priests sat on sheepskins at the side.

Of the symbolic qualities of the painting, those who have studied them must write. Human figures; the life-giver of the desert, the corn-stalk; their ancestors, the cliff-dwellers; the sky; the rainbow; the male and female principles; gods of earth and gods of water are all represented. The knowledge of this painting has been handed down from son to son for countless generations.

The sick woman, in her bare feet, entered and sat down on the base of the corn-stalk, after sprinkling an offering of meal toward the priests. The seated priests then began a low chant, to the accompaniment of the ceremonial rattles, while one of their number anointed the woman. This he did by touching the palms of his hands, first to certain portions of the painting and then touching her, on back and chest, arms and feet.

The chant changed, grew louder and shriller. The medicine-man sprinkled sacred water on the sand and gave the woman some to drink. Again he sprinkled the sand and again she drank. The chant fell to a low minor.

From outside was brought in a bowl of glowing wood embers. The lodge was now almost entirely dark, the woman's figure a gray silhouette, patient and touching. On the embers a powder was thrown, and the air was filled with a sharp and pungent odor. The priests noisily inhaled the smoke.

And now, in his bare fingers and without haste, the officiating priest took glowing embers to the woman and placed them in the sand beside her. She was given the bowl of water and held it for a moment. The chant changed again. It rose, powerful and compelling, as though to force the attention of the gods, while the woman poured the sacred water over the glowing coals.

As the embers died, so did the chant. The lodge was dark and still, the ceremony over.

We were now to go on to Crystal. The trucks had gone ahead. Hereafter we meant to drive them ahead, like cows. Then, if they broke down, we intended to camp round them. But we had not reckoned on that road.

After an hour of slow climbing, of watching them ahead lumber and sway up rocky ascents and stop panting to breathe, we passed them; not to see them again until in another state and under different circumstances, we met them again south of the railroad at Zuni, New Mexico.

Our climbing had taken us out of the low desert into the high. On a beautiful

wooded plateau, over seven thousand feet in elevation, we lunched in the shade beside a spring. Lunched and watched, as usual, for the trucks. They did not come.

At last we went on. All afternoon we traveled on those spicy uplands, with vistas of mountain and desert of great beauty, going slowly to give the trucks a chance to catch us. And at last, late in the afternoon, we got to Fort Defiance.

It was a quiet Sunday. We had been ten days in the desert, and here at last was a white man's town. Only forty or fifty miles to the south lay Gallup. Gallup, with mail and telegrams, and eight days before a play of mine had opened in New York! For eight days I had tried to forget "Spanish Love," tried not to wonder whether it had failed or succeeded. "The Bat," a second play, was to open the next day. And while we sat in the cars in that street at Fort Defiance, came the banker alongside and said, apropos of nothing: "There's a hotel at Gallup."

"Any news of the trucks?" our car inquired.

There was no news of them. There opened up suddenly in our midst a schism. There were the true adventurers, who meant to see Crystal or die. And there were the weak sisters, to whom I belonged, who suddenly saw in Gallup not, as before, merely a place to stretch one's legs from the limited, but a sort of paradise of ice, baths, beds, post-offices, and telegraph stations.

Late that evening three cars, still bearing under their dust the mud of the Little Colorado, stopped before the hotel at Gallup, and from them there emerged twelve wild-eyed and unkempt individuals, who carried and piled about them in that tidy lobby a vast collection of dust-covered rugs, pottery, baskets, motor garments, suitcases and thermos bottles. The women wore riding clothes or camping garb in the last stages of disrepair. Clutched in my arms was a Turkish towel, forgotten and thrown into the car at the last moment.

And as with one voice this motley crew said,

"Rooms, with baths."

Gallup, of course, was but an interlude. When our crystal-gazers had returned, we were then to go south into New Mexico, the Zuni country.

Bathed and fed, the trucks forgotten, we had time then to remember the wonders we had seen. It had been worth while, as always are beauty and ancient custom, and the ruins left by those who so long ago have gone before. There should be soon a procession of motor-cars touring our great deserts, each self-supporting and with a keg of good water. The motorist may tire of even the most beautiful scenery, but when he has such points of interest as Oraibi and Walpi, when he has the snake-dance and the sand-picture, when he may buy for a mere song the treasures of the desert, he has more than scenery. He has interest.

The crystal-gazers blew in late the next day. They reported, as we had expected, such rugs and jewelry as we had never seen. But they mentioned incidentally that the trucks had not appeared.

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The Unfair Sex

(Continued from page 42)

that he had been sent south to round off his selling-experience.

This was what he kept persistently in mind. If, in the background, other half-formed hopes still lingered, the memory of Mrs. Wynne's merciless exposure of them was enough to keep him firm in his refusal to recognize them.

Nevertheless, when his vagrant wandering brought him opposite the brilliantly lighted Plaza, some impulse not quite within his control halted him, and he stood for several moments, his eyes upon its many glowing windows. Among these, naturally, he did not know which might be Elspeth's, but the mere proximity of the hotel that housed her gave him pleasure of a sort.

Such, again, is the stuff love is made of.

The desire to enter and send up his card, that he might see her, if only for a moment, almost mastered him, but he put it down. He was, he informed himself, no schoolboy to let his emotions run away with him. The better to prevent such a catastrophe, he walked away so rapidly that the Argentines who are congenitally incapable of hurry, stared.

"Americano," announced more than one, as if that explained all.

This, however, was merely a momentary lapse. Jimmy knew that if he were to do business here, he must be as little *Americano* as possible. The very qualities that had brought him success back north would handicap him here, where the "punch" we value so highly is anathema, and any attempt to do business on a basis of Anglo-Saxon directness is defeated by the tortuous indirectness of the Latin races. This he realized, and when he started on his rounds the next morning, he was prepared to move cautiously, feeling his way.

The first day filled him with hope. The *señores* who were the heads of the big stores received him with the utmost courtesy. He made no effort to sell, letting them understand—sometimes in the Spanish he had acquired, and sometimes in the English they preferred to air, and which he felt rather needed airing—that he had called simply to pay his respects. He did, however, in every case manage to secure a second appointment for later in the week.

It was there, perhaps, that he made his first mistake. Nowhere on earth is "the less haste the more speed" as true as it is in Buenos Aires. Perhaps if there had not always been lurking in Jimmy's mind the thought of that dinner-engagement with Elspeth and Mrs. Wynne, and the very human, if unrecognized, desire to make a showing of some sort before them, he might have been still more circuitous and circumspect in his approach. Even as it was, he could never make himself wholly believe that he had rushed the *señores* in any way.

Then, after all, the dinner-engagement was postponed. The day before he was to have seen Elspeth again, he received a little note from her, saying that they were so sorry, but Mrs. Wynne had had a touch of an old illness, and that the doctor had recommended that they go to Mar del Plata—the Palm Beach of Argentina—for a change of air. And

that he would still be in Buenos Aires when they returned, and she was, his most sincerely, Elspeth Wyeth.

One guess—and only one—should be needed as to where Jimmy carried that brief letter.

Two days later, he did dine at the Plaza with Stephen, who called him up and invited him most urgently.

"How's business?" Stephen demanded blithely, after the waiter, taking his order most obsequiously, departed. "Making new records, I suppose."

Jimmy shook his head.

"I seem to be bunkered just now," he admitted.

"Too bad!" commiserated Stephen. "But they're that way down here, they tell me. They'll look your stuff all over, but when it comes to signing an order, they're worse than an old trout smelling round the hook. Why don't you take a vacation—you look as if you needed one—and come down to Mar del Plata with me. Elspeth and Mrs. Wynne are there, you know."

There was nothing in the world that Jimmy wanted to do more—but it is an awful thing to have a drop of the Covenanters in one's blood.

"Can't be done," said Jimmy. "I'm here for business, you know."

"All work and no play makes little Jimmy a dull boy," suggested Stephen. "Paste that in your hat."

From what followed, Jimmy had no doubt but what Stephen was taking no chances of being a dull boy. He was already well acquainted with the gilded youths who frequent the aristocratic Jockey Club; indeed, he had been put up for membership in that most exclusive of organizations. And apparently he was an honored guest in the homes of several old Argentine and Spanish families.

"How about shoes?" Jimmy couldn't help asking.

"Don't remind me of them," pleaded Stephen. "I suppose I'll have to get them out some day and make a sort of stab at selling a few just to satisfy the governor, but I know now I was never born for business. Or, at any rate, not for business except as it is conducted down here."

The next day, Stephen departed for Mar del Plata, and Jimmy returned to his rounds. The *señores* were *ocupado*—busy. It was a new and bewildering experience to Jimmy; he felt as if he had stepped out of all that was real into a fourth dimension. He wondered, as one fruitless day followed another, if it were really he, Jimmy Macallister, who faced so flat a failure, and in the end he began to wonder if his past successes had ever really happened.

Loneliness is the inevitable fate of a traveling salesman; reverses come to even the best of them. But never had Jimmy felt as he did as April melted into May—the May which was so lovely back home where the wonderful northern spring was weaving its eternal witchery. An almost overpowering nostalgia seized upon him at times, and, though he stubbornly resisted it, it added to his sense of defeat. He decided that the only thing he could do was to give up, go back home, and take his medicine.

Bitter the thought of that medicine was. Jimmy felt as Caesar might have if that last battle, at Thapsus, which was to make him ruler of the Roman world, had been a rout instead of a victory.

"It's only wasting the company's time and money," he told himself, and started, forthwith, for the American consul's office.

The latter was not busy, and he was inclined toward sociability.

"By the way—do you know young West?" he asked.

"Came down on the *Velasquez* with me," acknowledged Jimmy.

"You'll enjoy this then," said the consul. "You know how much attention he pays to business?" Jimmy nodded. "Well," continued the consul impressively, "yesterday he landed two orders—one for five thousand, another for twelve."

Jimmy stared uncomprehendingly.

"What?" he exclaimed.

The consul nodded.

"These Argentines think a lot of him," he explained. "He's been cutting a wide swath here. He's young and free with his money, and loves pleasure, and they understand that. Yesterday, he was giving a dinner in his suite up at the Plaza—just got back from Mar del Plata, you know—"

Jimmy moistened his lips.

"I hadn't heard—"

"Been down there enjoying himself as usual," commented the consul. "Well, one of his guests asked him if his father wasn't in business back in the States. West said he was—said he was supposed to be selling shoes here, sort of a good joke, you know. That made them all curious, and they made him dig up his sample-trunks and open them. The upshot of it all was that two *señores* in the dry-goods business here gave him the orders on the spot. Can you beat that?"

"No," managed Jimmy, realizing he must say something.

"I can," announced the consul, with great relish. "West told them he had never made out an order and didn't know how—he didn't want to spoil his party you see—and they made out their *own* orders for him!"

Earthquakes might have shaken the city, but they would have seemed to Jimmy only a part of a general upheaval which was tottering every known standard. He realized dimly that the consul was speaking to him.

"When are you starting back?"

"I've changed my mind," said Jimmy grimly. "I'm going to stay."

Twenty minutes of swift walking and of even swifter thinking, and Jimmy found the Plaza looming up before him. The sight of it crystallized his decision. He hesitated but a second, and then determinedly entered the luxurious lobby, braced for the plunge. He would not ask the firm to finance him further, but he had eleven thousand hard-earned dollars of his own. He was prepared to put them into the kitty, and to play the game as Coal Oil Johnny come to town might have—a desperate scheme, perhaps, but Jimmy felt desperate.

"I want a room," he informed the clerk. "I mean a suite."

Before the clerk could comply Jimmy was hailed.

"Where have you been keeping yourself?" demanded Stephen. "I've been trying to get you all morning. I've got a couple of men up-stairs I want you to meet."

As it proved, Jimmy had already met them, although not recently. Somehow, they had always been *occupado*. Just now, though they were *occupado* with Stephen's cigars and excellent wines, they greeted Jimmy with great courtesy, and assured him they had not forgotten him and that they hoped they might soon give him some orders—which was exactly what they had said the last time he had seen them.

"That's the talk!" Stephen interrupted exuberantly. "You get your trunks up here, Jimmy, and we'll have a little lunch—there are several other chaps I want you to meet—and then we'll let them write their own orders."

The señores smiled as if they found Stephen's little jokes as agreeable as his hospitality, and nothing more was said about it until the lunch was concluded, with vintage wines that would have made any American sales-manager a victim of apoplexy if he believed they were to be a part of a salesman's account. Then Stephen, acting as stage manager, produced Jimmy's sample-trunks and the surprising—the astounding—farce was played through. The señores, hypnotized, it would seem, by their desire to please Stephen, wrote *their own orders again!*

"Did a better job for you than I did for myself," commented Stephen, when the señores had departed. "But we certainly made them come across, didn't we, Jimmy?"

Jimmy swallowed.

"You did," he said. "And I think it's the whitest thing I ever heard of. If I ever get a chance to repay you—"

"Why," exclaimed Stephen, sincerely surprised. "That was the original agreement. Don't you remember—shoes and socks, hand-in-glove, closer-than-brother? I'm mighty glad to have had the chance—" He paused abruptly, remembering another agreement they had made. "Seen Elspeth lately?" he asked.

Jimmy shook his head, conscious that something was coming perhaps—something that the mere thought of made him steel his heart even while he smiled determinedly.

"I proposed to her last month down at Mar del Plata," confessed Stephen. "And she turned me down—gently but firmly. She"—Stephen smiled ruefully—"talked to me like a Dutch uncle. Said she liked me and all that, but—oh well, you may as well have it in a lump—she couldn't respect me, and couldn't love a man for whom she had no respect." While Jimmy struggled to say something Stephen went on, unheeding. "I can't help being a born butterfly. I told her that if she'd say one little word, Jimmy, I'd turn over a new leaf, that I'd even peddle shoes to please her. But she wouldn't say it—"

Jimmy hesitated. Then,

"Can't you see she wanted you to do it of your own accord—first," he said.

In the distance, a silvery bell struck the hour. Stephen glanced at his watch.

"Five o'clock!" he exclaimed, aghast. "I'm sorry, Jimmy, but I've got an engagement"—if Jimmy had been less in



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tumult himself, he must have wondered why Stephen blushed so—"and I've got to change. Stick around while I do."

He disappeared for a few minutes, and then returned.

"I say, Jimmy, I've got a box for the races to-morrow. Come along?"

So strong are the habits of a lifetime that Jimmy almost said "No" before he realized he must say, "Yes."

"That's the talk!" said Stephen. "You've sure earned a vacation. Say the word, Jimmy, and I'll have you put up for the Jockey Club."

"I'll say it," said Jimmy. "And thank you."

"Attaboy!" encouraged Stephen. "I'm ready. Let's go—unless you want to make yourself at home here—"

Jimmy, however, craved air. He descended with Stephen and, refusing the latter's proffered lift, indulged once more in the pestiferous American habit of pedestrianism. He walked indeed until his legs protested. Then he found a little park, and sat down on a bench there.

"She loves him," he thought, "but she doesn't respect him. And they have quarreled."

The good that is in the worst of us, and the evil that is in the best of us, confronted with this knowledge, waged bitter battle in Jimmy's heart.

At that instant, Elspeth saw him, and thought he looked like a stranger in a strange land who has fallen on evil days. She was sitting in a car outside one of the great stores waiting for Mrs. Wynne to return. The instant feeling that he was in trouble was so strong that she had an impulse to go to him. But she hesitated, and, while she hesitated, Mrs. Wynne returned and the opportunity was lost.

As the car picked up momentum, Mrs. Wynne glanced at her.

"I don't pretend to be a clairvoyant," she said, "but I'm not blind. You look as if you had seen a ghost—am I to be confided in?"

Elspeth bit her lip. Then,

"I've just seen Jimmy Macallister," she confessed. "He—he was sitting on a bench in the park and he looked so lonely and discouraged. I'm afraid things aren't going well with him here—"

"What of it?" demanded Mrs. Wynne dryly.

Elspeth's glance was indignant.

"I think it's a shame!" she affirmed.

"Let's have him to dinner and offer comfort and solace," suggested Mrs. Wynne. "We owe him a dinner, you remember."

Elspeth's color deepened.

"It would be a real kindness, I think—"

So it was that Jimmy, returning, at last, to the hotel from which he had not yet moved his personal effects to the Plaza, found a message waiting for him. He read it through twice, trying to ignore a small inner voice that had suddenly come to life again. "Are you going to play the game?" it clamored, persistently.

Jimmy's lips set. "Straight through," he assured it.

If he looked like an early-Christian martyr as he sent up his name at the

Plaza, what wonder? Given the choice, he would have preferred burning at the stake to what lay ahead. But he was going through—straight through!

Mrs. Wynne was very cordial, but Elspeth, conscious of a lurking amusement in her chaperon's eyes, was a little constrained. Jimmy himself was a little silent. Even so dinner passed off very well, whatever it consisted of—Jimmy never knew—and with no mention made of shoes or socks until it was well toward its end. Then Elspeth asked if he had seen Stephen lately. And Jimmy, his heart beginning to beat so that it seemed they must hear it, said he had—that very day.

"Then you've heard—about those orders of his?" asked Elspeth.

Jimmy nodded, and braced himself for the plunge.

"He beat me at my own game," he said. "I've been breaking my neck to sell those same men ever since I got here, and I couldn't. I went down to the American consul's office this morning ready to go home and resign, and he told me about Stephen—"

"Do you mean," Mrs. Wynne broke in, "you hadn't sold any of them?"

"Not a cent's worth," confessed Jimmy, without palliation. "When I heard that Stephen had sold eighteen thousand dollars' worth, it almost floored me. Of course, the orders aren't phenomenal, but they start business relations."

Elspeth's eyes flashed, and in them Jimmy glimpsed that which Stephen had characterized as a strain of the Puritan.

"I don't care!" she announced impulsively. "It doesn't seem fair to me that a man who works and works fails while a man who just plays and spends money succeeds. It's wrong, and nobody can tell me otherwise."

Whereupon Mrs. Wynne proved herself the perfect chaperon.

"Excuse me a moment," she murmured, and, rising, departed.

She might as well have stayed; they hardly realized she was going, though Jimmy came automatically to his feet. He stood, gazing at Elspeth, whose lovely face was flushed with indignation and who was the more adorable for that. A mad hope surged in him; in his eyes shone that which must forever fill the daughters of Eve with delicious terror. Then, as suddenly as it had flashed, it went out.

"I think," he said quietly, though there were curious little white lines about his lips, "that you do not do Stephen justice. Luck was with him perhaps—he planned no campaign and yet was successful, but you can't help admitting that he has qualities that endear him to everybody."

"I think," she persisted, "that a man needs something more."

The veriest fraction of a second Jimmy hesitated, but this should not be held against him. He believed implicitly that to continue was to crush out his last chance and with her before him, so unbelievably lovely, the temptation to let things so rest was almost overpowering. Yet he shook himself free.

"The greatest tribute that any man can pay to another is to say that he is white

clean through," he said, his eyes holding Elspeth's. "Stephen is white—clean through. Let me tell you what he did for me to-day."

Elspeth listened, and as Jimmy came to his climax, her eyes glowed.

"That," she said, softly, "was sweet of him."

The cadences of her voice fell on Jimmy's heart like a funeral chant.

"I wanted you to know," he explained, "just what—and how much I think of him. I believe any woman would be proud and happy—"

Elspeth gave him a quick glance.

"You remind me," she began, without thought, "of John Alden pleading for Myles Standish—" She stopped short, as realization of the possible interpretation that might be put on it came to her. "Oh!" she exclaimed, the loveliest of crimsons suffusing her face. "I didn't mean that. And anyway," she rushed on hectically, "he doesn't like me any more because I—I preached to him so much. There's a girl he met at Mar del Plata that he's really quite mad about, though he won't admit it yet."

The table was between them; Elspeth felt, somehow, that it must be kept between them at all costs. Yet when he started round it, she seemed paralyzed.

"Please—please!" she begged, quickly. "I—Mrs. Wynne—"

Eden had but one man and but one woman and there was peace. In that suite in the Plaza, were one man and one woman, and, outside the door, performing the office of an angel with a flaming sword, though she might not resemble him, stood Mrs. Wynne.

"You needn't remove the service just yet," she informed the waiter, whose return she had anticipated. "I'll ring when I want you."

He retired, and she went back to her own room and stood, for a decent interval, looking over the lighted city. Finally, she returned—to Eden.

"I might have remembered," she mused, "that Elspeth is her father's daughter. I wonder if Stephen ever had a chance."

Finally she turned and returned—to Eden.

"Should I have knocked?" she asked demurely. "I'm sorry—"

Elspeth would have freed herself, but Jimmy held her fast. He would have held her so in the face of the concentrated gaze of creation just then.

Mrs. Wynne smiled.

"As the vicarious romancer," she said, "I'd appreciate details please, as to when it began and why it ended—"

"It began for me back on the *Velasquez* the first time I saw her," said Jimmy.

"Love at first sight," commented Mrs. Wynne. "How exciting." She turned to Elspeth. "And you, my dear?"

Elspeth colored vividly. "I—I don't know when it began," she confessed. "I—I didn't even know it had begun really until"—she raised her lovely eyes to Jimmy—"until you were so dear about standing up for him that I—I just couldn't help it."

The last words sounded as if they had been squeezed out of her—as, indeed, they were.



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